

MY
THREE
HUSBANDS

11

BERTRAND SMITH
COPIES OF BOOKS
10 PACIFIC AVENUE
LONG BEACH, CALIF.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

MY THREE HUSBANDS

MY
THREE
HUSBANDS



NEW YORK
BRENTANO'S
1921

Made in the United States of America

SRLF

URL

MC:4 701055

TO
MY DEAR HUSBANDS
(THREE)

I DEDICATE this little volume. It is dictated from a bed of solitary and acute suffering (mental) in the hope that if there is really any truth in the Revelations now appearing in the Sunday Press it may meet my dear departed's eyes—or whatever they see with over there, and that they may come to understand some little something more about their loving wife, to whom they were all equally devoted.

PREFACE

HAVING recently cremated and buried my darling George, last of my three husbands—all splendid specimens of manhood, in their own peculiar way, I am resting, bowed down by this triple crown of grief. To bury a husband is no light task—especially when one was devoted to him, but to bury *three* is almost more than a poor frail woman's strength can stand.

And then the loneliness! Ah me! is there anything worse than the tragedy of a lonely woman's life I wonder? The thought brings some small measure of relief, for when all is said and done I have not been so very lonely after all; perhaps I may not be lonely for long. As I think of my poor million sisters doomed to a man-less existence pity surges up from my bosom and almost chokes me. Poor, poor sisters! Never to feel the touch of a loving husband's lips. Never to hold a husband's heart in your hands and squeeze it gently—oh so gently. Never to know your power. How sad it all is!

It is to these less fortunate sisters that I address

these words, in the hope that from them they will learn something of the art of Husbandry—the getting, managing, and keeping of a husband. As a thrice-blessèd bride I feel that I am fully qualified for my self-appointed task. At all events it will occupy the time until Number Four comes along.

CONTENTS

NUMBER ONE

	PAGE
POOR DEAR EDWARD	11

NUMBER TWO

ROGER	85
-----------------	----

NUMBER THREE

GEORGE—MY THIRD	165
---------------------------	-----

MY THREE HUSBANDS

NUMBER ONE

POOR DEAR EDWARD

I

THE great trouble with the majority of women to-day is that they fail to recognise a good thing when they see it. We are so very liable to take a heart-flutter for a brain-wave—a fatal mistake, and often tragic in its results to our happiness.

There are many feelings that cause a woman's heart to flutter, which the inexperienced will put down to Love. But they may not be Love. A woman's heart is so much bigger than a man's, and consequently capable of far greater flutters. In a woman's heart lie Mother-love, Mate-love, Friendship, Passion, and Pity, and the most subtle of these is Mother-love and Pity. These two occupy a great portion of a woman's heart, and are apt to swell up to such an extent as to usurp the whole. These heart-flutters are the greatest assets that a woman possesses, and at

the same time they are her gravest dangers. It is a combination of Pity and Mother-love that makes a good woman cast her pearls before swine. She sees some weakling, some rotter in trousers, and at first feels sorry for such a miserable specimen of the *genus homo*. In her great strength she towers above him, and knows it. Then Pity plays at her heartstrings—a sad little, soft little tune, she feels that she would like to take care of the wretched creature, buck him up, and make a man of him. Then the soft little, sad little tune swells into a great melody of Mother-love; she feels that she would like to snuggle this poor lost atom of humanity, watch over it, and protect it. In the greatness of her heart she smiles upon this unworthy creature, and her pitiful smiles are misconstrued by him into meaning admiration! He, worm-like, creeps to her, puts his head on her knees, and licks her hand. And she strokes his hair, and perhaps cries a little.

Then before anyone knows anything about it, or can warn her, they are married.

And men point to this noble-hearted woman, fit mate for a hero, as an example to prove their foolish theory that good women invariably marry rotters or roués. Little they know about it!

If the woman with a heart is fortunate enough to escape the dangers of premature Mother-love and Pity, her next enemy is Passion, but most of us are educated into concealing if not smothering this portion of our heart. If it does appear

it only peeps out from under lowered lashes, and a mere man would take it for shyness, or innocence, or something else equally wide of the mark.

Lucky is the woman who learns while still in her teens to know herself, and her heart. To that woman her feelings will not be strange flutterings but familiar spirits. She will recognise each as it puts in an appearance, and give to each its allotted function in her life. Such is the woman who will wait for her soul mate, whether that waiting means years or a life time, and she it is who will give all her heart to the one man who is the missing half of her circle. Such is the woman who will hold that man's love through all time to Eternity, and she it is who will regenerate the world. Unfortunately most of us are either ignorant of ourselves or tire so soon of waiting.

II

I WAS seventeen when I married my first husband. He was a soldier man, twenty years older than myself, tall, strong, with a fine figure, and iron grey hair and moustache that gave him a most distinguished appearance; his eyes were grey—the most trustworthy colour for men's eyes.

In those days we were living at Southsea. Father, a retired Colonel of the Indian Army, was of the old-fashioned type, a regular martinet. He ruled us all, including mother, with a rod of iron. He was a very handsome man, with snow-white hair, and greatly respected by everyone—even the servants. At table he was terrifying. With the carving knife in one hand and the fork in the other he would bang the board, as a preliminary to the old-fashioned grace: "Thank God for what we are about to receive, Amen." Another bang! Then the meal would commence. And what a meal! Except mother, who was more or less immune, or any grown up friends who happened to be feeding with us, no one was allowed to speak unless they were spoken to. "Children must be seen and not heard," was the edict, unalterable as any law of the Medes and Persians—and as far as I was concerned, and I was the eldest, it was only amended *after I was married!* Another table joke—equally terrifying—was: "Those who ask don't get, and those who don't ask don't want." This combined with the former produced a stilly silence from us children, an occasional growl from father, a few sweet words from mother, and a ceaseless rattle of knives and forks.

Looking back, it was a terrible time!

A late Victorian upbringing was ours: the boys—I only had one brother—packed off to school as soon as they could walk properly, the girls brought up at home with nurses, governess, and

all the sanctity of seclusion. We girls—there were four of us—literally knew nothing of ourselves, our neighbours, or the outside world; and yet I suppose we were what is commonly termed accomplished.

Incredible though it may seem, my first long frock was my wedding-dress, and I only put my hair up after I was engaged. Until I was married I had never been in a bus or tram, and the only men I knew were my father and brother.

Were we discontented? Certainly not! To be discontented one must think, and I know I never thought, merely did what I was told as became a daughter of a long line of soldiers. With us all, mother included, father's word was law, and in him was seated all authority. I don't think any of us loved father—love and authority don't amalgamate—but we respected him vastly. Mother we did love. She was the sweetest, kindest, gentlest little mother imaginable; "little mother" was our name for her. Father called her "Fluffy."

To this day I don't know why I was allowed to play chess with Major M——. Perhaps because he was an old friend of father's—he had been a subaltern in the regiment father commanded in India—and happened to be very fond of chess and I was the only member of the family who could play. At all events we used to play chess after dinner. He was an extremely courteous gentleman, and always let me win; so I liked him. And he was most interesting, and between

games he would tell me all sorts of things about foreign countries and customs and the frontier campaigns in which he had served.

Then one evening he quietly took my hand, just as I was going to checkmate him, and told me very gravely and very kindly that he loved me, and "did I consider him too old for a husband?" I was absolutely flabbergasted! It's all right for modern young women to sniff at this statement, and exclaim: "Stuff and nonsense!" "Rubbish," or its equivalent in modern slang, but I can assure you that I hadn't the slightest idea of any such thing. I was flabbergasted, as I say; but too well brought up to show it. So I merely blushed prettily and mumbled something about: greatly honoured, or so sudden, or some such expression that I had read in one or other of those carefully selected novels which had been considered necessary to our education.

"I worship the ground you walk on," was his next surprising statement.

"How sweet of you!" I replied.

"But you little thing, don't you understand? Don't you know how beautiful you are?" He still held my hand.

Silly fellow! Of course I knew that I was beautiful. I was just wondering what in the world to say; when much to my relief in came father. Poor dear Edward dropped my hand as if it had been a hot brick, and stood up at full height—rather red about the ears. Poor dear!

thought I, now won't he catch it! for father's face was an open book of mingled surprise and rage. "I have this moment asked your daughter, sir," he said, "to do me the great honour of becoming my wife." Wasn't it sweet of him?

For a moment father looked at him as though he considered he had lost his reason. Then he turned and looked at me. I lowered my eyes bashfully and blushed. When I looked up again he was still looking at me. Then he smiled, took one of my hands in his and patted it. "Little monkey!" he said. "How well you have kept your secret." Then he took one of poor dear Edward's hands and placed mine in it, with a "God bless you, my children," just like the old novels said fathers did. I know now that Edward's hand should have been hot, but it wasn't; it was icy cold, poor fellow! With that father left the room.

III

IF I had known what I know now I never should have married Edward.

So soon as father had turned his back, Edward dropped my hand again. When the door closed he stood looking very grave and rather white. Then he said quietly: "I know you don't love me now,

how could you? We can easily get out of it if you wish."

"Of course I don't love you!" said I, stamping my foot. "How dare you mislead father into thinking that I did! You did it deliberately; you know you did! and you are old—old enough to be my grandfather! How dare you! How dare you!"

He looked so white and pathetic and old as he stood there, that all at once that treacherous Pity fluttered in my heart and stayed my tongue. I felt suddenly grown up and complete master of the situation. Edward's six feet of solid masculinity began gradually to diminish before my five of femininity. Critically I looked him all over. Poor fellow! anyone could see that he needed a wife to look after him; and he did not look at all well, rather haggard and puckered about the eyes; he wanted someone to feed him up and nurse him.

"Shall I go and explain the position to your father?" he asked.

There speaks a man, thought I. Anyone can see that he's dying for love of me, and yet he is willing to give me up, and ready to beard father.

"Do you love me very much?" I asked.

"Love you! you beautiful little witch! Why I—I—life won't be worth living without you."

He came nearer and made to seize my hand.

We resumed our game of chess—only one or two of the pieces had been moved—and the end of it was that I decided to take pity on Edward.

That evening I put my hair up.

IV

OBVIOUSLY I did not love Edward. On several occasions I very nearly broke off the engagement. But it was all such fun, and everyone was so pleased, and I had become quite an important person, and Edward was so kind and considerate and docile, that I thought better of it. Even then it was Fate that helped Edward, for I am quite certain that I could never have lasted out a long engagement. As it was he only had three months more leave. Of course I suggested that we should be engaged and perhaps get married on his *next* leave. Whereupon he pointed out that he would get no more leave for five years and that by that time he would be forty-two. I must say Edward never cheated. Forty-two! It gave me quite a turn. But again Pity and Mother-love came to his assistance. If he was old and thin and white and haggard and grey now, what *would* he be then? At that moment I came nearer to loving Edward than I had ever done before. I remember I threw my arms round his neck—he was sitting down at the time—and kissed him—on the forehead. He was delighted, poor fellow!

The engagement opened up a new and beautiful world filled with pretty frocks and all sorts of wonderful presents. Father for once became almost

generous—I think mother had a great deal to do with that—and my trousseau was lovely. As for Edward he brought me something every day; he seemed to have heaps of money, which was nice I thought. One evening he and father had a long discussion in the study about settlements and things, and the next morning mother told me that I must not be extravagant as Edward was a poor man. But as he continued to bring me presents every day I thought that mother must be mistaken.

Oh! I forget to mention one thing rather interesting; it was when we went to choose the engagement ring. With an air of great solemnity Edward took me one afternoon to a large jeweller's in the Palmerston Road, and the man brought out tray after tray of the duckiest rings. There was one, a perfect gem! a sapphire and diamond hoop; and there was another set with rubies and diamonds. I didn't know which to choose. I asked Edward, and he didn't seem to know either. The shopman suggested *both*. So we took the two.

I often think what a little beast I must have been in those days.

V

ALL too soon the wedding day came round. It was a beautiful spring day—"A happy augury," mother said. The wedding dress was simply scrumptuous, and I looked lovely in it. Helen, the cook, nearly "threw a fit" as nurse, who dressed me, said proudly. Of course I was excited. I always am at weddings; I suppose it is the soldier strain in me. There is something so—what word do I want—adventurous about a wedding, a feeling of setting out for the Unknown; something like Columbus must have felt when he set sail for America. I expect it is the same sort of feeling that made little England a great Empire.

Father gave me away. He did it very nicely and as though he liked it. My sisters made charming bridesmaids. Edward looked splendid in his uniform—really quite handsome! and I am sure everyone thought I was a very lucky girl. His best man was very ugly. I suppose that I should have felt nervous, but I didn't. I never have been nervous of anything—at least not of ordinary normal people and things. Edward was nervous. Not that he showed it outwardly, but I could feel his hand trembling when he took mine; and when he was putting on the ring and

found it rather small for my finger he became so panicky and confused that I had to put it on myself. The best man smiled—nasty beast! But the clergyman, an old man with a bald head and sympathetic eyes, was very kind and considerate. When he came to the words: "love, honour, and obey," he mumbled them so that they were unintelligible, and I said "yes" with an easy conscience.

After the service everyone kissed each other. I kissed all Edward's friends, except the best man—ugly toad! and Edward manfully kissed all mine. Gwen, the oldest of my sisters, must have found it rather nice, for she whispered: "He's awfully jolly! You *are* a lucky girl."

Then came the reception at home. Father had certainly spread himself and champagne corks were popping in all directions. My Uncle Walter was the life and soul of the party. An old dear! a sort of socialist, who had insisted on coming in the most extraordinary clothes. I remember he had a bright check waistcoat and striped flannel trousers which in combination with an ancient frock coat and grey top hat made him look screamingly funny. The amount of champagne he drank was awful and he would only drink the *tops* of the bottles. I heard the head butler, or whoever he was, hired for the occasion, whisper to father: "Hexcuse me, sir, but that there funny old gent in the white 'at is hopening a wonnerful lot of bottles. Hi suppose hits hall right?" I didn't catch what father said, but I saw what he looked.

I don't know what happened to poor dear Edward; as a matter of fact in the excitement I forgot all about him—it was my first grown up party. Perhaps the glass of champagne which Uncle Walter made me take made things look *couleur de rose* for me, but it was a lovely reception! I was positively mutinous when mother took me off to change.

And then for a little while things became sad. Mother tried to look cheerful as she helped me on with my travelling dress and whispered all sorts of advice about not being afraid; that Edward was a charming gentleman; that everything would be all right; and that a honeymoon was really and truly the happiest time in one's whole life. And all the time she patted me and kissed me and looked as if she were telling stories—mother never could tell stories with any semblance of truth.

For some strange reason I began to feel nervous. I felt certain that mother knew something that I did not. "Oh! it's going to be awful I know," I said. "I shan't go! There's plenty of time to tell Edward. He can go alone; he won't mind *really*. I can't leave you, mummy darling."

Then mother cried, and nurse cried, and Helen—the cook—cried, and everyone cried, and I cried. It was miserable!

A loud bang on the door brought us to our senses, and father's roar of expostulation: that the cab was at the door and that we were keeping everyone waiting, produced a flutter of handkerchiefs. We all composed ourselves, and dried

each other's tears—at least I dried mother's and she mine. I think nurse dried Helen's. Father certainly saved the situation.

Downstairs we all trooped, through the hall, where everyone cheered and threw confetti and rice. At the door stood Edward. He took my hand. Father kissed the top of my head, mother pecked me on the cheek, and we walked down the steps. More confetti, more rice, more cheers, as Edward handed me into the cab. When he had arranged the carriage rug round my knees, he got in. The coachman cracked his whip, someone threw an old slipper, and we were off. My first honeymoon!

"Thank God!" said Edward devoutly.

Poor dear Edward! To this day I am quite sure that he thought himself a very lucky man in my having married him. Not only that, but I am positive that were he alive now he would be only too delighted to make me a fourth instead of a first husband.

VI

I MUST say that I was never nervous of Edward. After father—the only man I knew except my brother, who was always away at school—Edward was such a delightful change. He was always

so kind and considerate and gentle; always put me and my wishes first. There is always something rather nice at first in feeling important. After five minutes of married life I knew that I was his master; and so delighted was I at the discovery—that this huge man-creature, bigger than my own father, would eat out of my hand—that then and there I made up my mind to make the most of my powers.

In the cab I let him kiss me once. He wanted another in the train, so I called the guard, made him unlock the door, and offered seats in our reserved compartment to two soldiers who couldn't find a seat anywhere. They were delighted, poor fellows, said that they had been standing up for hours and fully expected to stand all the way to Scotland. Edward was not pleased; not that he said anything, only looked.

We spent our honeymoon in Scotland. Edward had planned it all as a big surprise. He had taken rooms at an awful place called Inveruglas (I don't mind mentioning it as I shall most assuredly never go back there) on the shores of Loch Lomond. Besides a poky sitting-room stuffed with china dogs, he had ordered only one bedroom. I asked him what he meant by it, and he seemed quite surprised. Fortunately the landlady had another for Edward, at the other end of the house.

I stood Inveruglas for a week. Seven whole days of clambering and climbing over mountains and rocks, to admire the same lake first from this

angle and then from that. Naturally I got tired of the view; and I have never been very fond of views. I prefer people. Then again Edward, poor dear, was beginning to get just a little boring—always begging to be allowed to kiss me when I didn't want him to. But the most painfully unpleasant part of the whole business were my boots; they were emphatically not built for mountaineering. I always did hate hob-nailed boots!

I suppose that if only I had told Edward about my poor feet he would not have been so disappointed, poor fellow! But one never knows these things until afterwards, when it is too late.

The remainder of our honeymoon we spent in Edinburgh. And Edward was so kind, and patient, and gentle with me; and so generous; that after a time I let him sleep in the dressing-room, which opened from my room. But I made him go to bed *first*, and then locked him in.

VII

MEN—unmarried men—usually imagine that all women are born-daughters, born-wives, born-housewives, born-mothers, and, if they live long enough, born-grandmothers. When they dis-

cover that this isn't so, they invariably pretend to be shocked, sometimes horribly scandalised. If the woman is pretty and illusive, she is forgiven. If she is ugly and at hand, she may even be beaten. In all of which the husband is quite justified I think; for it must be simply wretched for the man who marries for a home to find that his wife can't manage one—and with hotels so expensive! Then again it must be frightfully annoying to marry because one loves children, and then to have to adopt one.

Of course Edward married me for myself, but so many men have ulterior motives well at the back of their minds when they marry. Although married to Edward I did not consider that I owed him any duty—except just to look pretty, dress nicely, and see that he did the same. I had married him for Pity, pity for his grey hairs, and I was quite ready to give him tons of Pity. But he wanted more, expected more; I soon saw that. After a time he began to get peaky; and yet he had plenty to eat, for I ordered the meals. I thought that perhaps he might be thirsty—father was, so I allowed him three whiskies and sodas a day. Still he looked unsatisfied.

"Edward, you're not eating enough," I said to him one day after dinner. "Poor darling, you're getting absolutely emaciated!"

"It isn't *that*!" said Edward, rather bitterly I thought.

"What is it then? Anything that I've done?"

"It's—oh! you little provocative creature—it's *you* I want."

"Haven't you got me?"

"Got you? Good God! I've only touched the hem of your dress."

"There are heaps of men in this very hotel who would dearly love to have a chance to do *that*!"

"I know; I'm a deuced lucky fellow! But somehow——"

"You may kiss me, Edward," said I. "Once." He looked too pathetic for words, poor dear Edward!

I was tired that evening, and my head ached rather, so I went to bed early. Edward was fearfully worried, and wanted to bring me up smelling salts, brandy, and all sorts of things. This he whispered through the keyhole. But I told him to go away. I felt strange. I wanted to think things over.

In these emancipated days girls know much more than ever we used to know. A very good thing too, I think. When I married Edward I literally knew *nothing*. Neither I, nor my sisters, had any reason to doubt that the doctor brought the babies in his bag. Father slept in his dressing-room. All our books were carefully chosen for us. We only went to those plays that father decided were "quite harmless." All our lives we were protected from the world outside, from ourselves. So far as I was concerned, men

and women were different only in their clothes and habits. A man was strong, a woman weak. A man's appointed task was to rule, a woman's to obey. A man signed cheques, which a woman spent. A man's purpose in life was to protect his womenfolk. A woman's to be protected in as charming a manner as possible. A man was the authority to which all women must bow the head.

Now children dislike authority; it never comes natural to them. They may be broken to authority, but the time will come when they will break out or burst. Everyone loves freedom, and I think that freedom was meant for everyone.

I had had seventeen years of father; and I had no intention of handing over father's authority to Edward without a struggle. Edward surrendered in five minutes. Victory Number One.

As Edward was not father, and as Edward asked nicely and did not order, was he entitled to receive?

Of course the crux of the situation was the dressing-room. I could see that. Father slept in mother's dressing-room; or rather his own. But Edward was not father. Edward hated the dressing-room, said he couldn't sleep. It looked a nice enough little room to me. If I told Edward to stay there till doomsday he would stay—of course he would stay, being Edward. But I couldn't command him to sleep. Perhaps he was lonely? Eileen—my youngest sister—never would sleep by herself. Why hadn't I thought of asking him? I would ask him. I could hear him outside.

"Edward!" I called.

"Yes, darling?"

"Are you lonely in the dressing-room?"

He let out an awful sound like a hollow groan.

"Why don't you answer?"

"Open the door, and I'll tell you."

"Tell me from *there*; I can hear you quite clearly."

"I can't! There are people walking about."

"Bother the people. Are you?"

"Well, yes!"

"Poor old fellow!"

"Open the door, darling?"—in a whisper.

"No; I'm not lonely. I've been thinking: would you get that nice Captain Woodhead to share a room with you?"

"You little devil!"

"Edward! is that *you* speaking?"

"You know it is."

"Then go away, and calm yourself."

If Edward had not been so dictatorial I might have put on my dressing-gown and let him come through to his dressing-room. But he sounded mutinous, and I could not afford a mutiny so soon. For ages I could hear him prowling about outside. He knocked several times; I snored loudly. Presently I fell asleep.

Edward was the most provokingly patient man that I have ever known. He was still there when I woke up next morning.

VIII

IN comparison with a modern liner the "Alligator" was a fearful old tub, although naturally I didn't know that at the time. But I did think that they might have had dressing-rooms. If I had known we should never have gone by that boat, at least I shouldn't; but Edward never told me a word about it. When I did find out I was furious, and sent him to the Purser to get another cabin. There wasn't another. So—well it had to be, I quite realise that now. Mothers should tell their daughters these things; I believe they do nowadays. All this foolish humbug and hypocrisy, and false modesty, is loathsome! It's enough to make a girl *hate* her husband. If it had been any other man but Edward I should have loathed and left him, I know—ship or no ship; but Edward was the soul of kindness and gentleness and chivalry.

I wish I could have loved Edward—if only for his patience and tenderness to me. I tried hard, so hard, to love him. But one can't compel Love; it just comes. Real love is such a rare thing. How many of us, alas, are incapable of feeling love; something wrong in our make up I expect. I know that I have never yet been properly in love. Three times married and never in love: what an

awful revelation, isn't it? Somehow I know that love, real love, is bigger than a mere woman or man: that Love is only for the big—and I am so small, five feet one, no more!

Of course I have fancied myself in love hundreds of times. Who hasn't?

The voyage was delightful. I had never been so far afield before, merely to the Continent, and everything was wonderful with the glamour of newness. I love novelty. After passing Gib we had dances and concerts every night. There were very few women on board, and of these the majority were old and yellow and ugly—the Indian climate is awfully trying to one's complexion; and there were no brides to be on the boat; and I was the only bride. Neither was I ugly, nor yellow, nor old. Besides, I had some dreams of frocks. Then again I had a voice (soprano), the one thing of mine that father had cultivated properly. There were crowds of men on board, mostly officers going back to their regiments. Many of them were young; most of them liked me.

Now I like being liked—most women do. Those who say that they don't, say so because they aren't liked—at least not by men. I like having nice things said to me. I don't care a rap what people say behind my back; I know no man would say nasty things behind my back, he would be too busy looking at my figure and ankles. If some kind woman friend tells me, in strict confidence, something nasty that some man

has said about me, I put it down to the woman's account. Somehow I don't like women; they are so "catty." Men are never catty. I am not saying this because I am a woman—and therefore catty myself—but because it is so. There are some women who are not cats; I know that now. But they are women who work, who do things, who haven't time to be catty. Cattyness I have discovered comes from having nothing to do. If men were brought up like women they would be catty. A cat is always a pampered creature who purrs at someone else's fireside, and spits when it is moved. A cat is the only animal I know that doesn't work. Men always have things to do. I don't mean that they all work; but they do things. They hunt, or shoot, or play polo, or have a profession, or make money, or something. The majority of men are producers, while women have, for ages and ages, been consumers and parasites. I am a consumer, and, I suppose, a parasite; I was taught to be from earliest infancy. Now, thinking things over, I would love to do things, useful things; but I don't know how, and have no intention of learning at my time of life. I have produced five children—that is something—my one consolation. Some women haven't even done that.

Another thing I like about men: they have a sense of Duty—taught them no doubt at school; and they have, or used to have until we threw it back at them, a sense of chivalry. Men, all men, always were chivalrous, until women began to

wear trousers. A man can't be chivalrous to trousers; it isn't in his nature; I couldn't be if I were a man. Men are only chivalrous to women because they consider them weaker than themselves; and the wise woman who likes men to be chivalrous to her must make out that she is weak, even if she knows that she isn't. Even to-day with all these crowds in London, packed tubes and underground, crammed busses and trams, impossible taxis, equality of sexes, and so on, I have never suffered. If I want to catch a bus—and I often go in a bus—I don't push and jostle—it wouldn't be much good if I did. I simply look pretty, and frail, and a little tired. I may even whisper—quite loudly—something about: “Oh! what a crowd, I shall *never* get home.” The rest I leave to the men; and men have never failed me. Then again, I always thank them sweetly and smile. A working man in corduroys, with a clay pipe, once made a passage for me. I gave him, not a copper, but the *Flor de Dijon* someone had given me—a man of course. He put it in his buttonhole: and I heard him say to the conductor: “That's what I calls a *real* lidy!” That man knew. People who work can always be relied upon to distinguish true from false. I like working people—men especially—because, I suppose, I have never worked. The British working man has an unerring eye for what he calls the “real gentry”; what he hates, and I am with him heart and soul, is the pseudo-gentry. The pseudo-gentry pay for everything in

money. We don't. We put ourselves in that man's place—for the merest moment of course—and think: "Now what would *we* like? What would *we* appreciate if *we* were that man?" So we give him a whisky and soda, or a flower, or a handshake, or a smile.

Of course chivalry is dying fast, poor thing! It seems sad to see it passing away, for it *is* so pleasant. But I suppose that it is all for the best; everything always is. Presently, when the millenium takes place—not in my time I am afraid—women and men will learn, equally, to be chivalrous to the young and the old and to all things weaker than themselves.

Personally, as I say, I like men to be chivalrous to me. And so I am weak—oh! such a frail, flimsy, little golden-haired thing! Not one grey hair yet; not the teeniest little crow's-foot of a wrinkle! Massage, my sisters; and vaseline. And my figure; as trim and neat as a schoolgirl's! Physical exercises—not too strenuous. And—hush!—I am a grandmother! and have had *five* children. I think I mentioned that before; I am rather proud of it. My age? Well really it isn't so very much, and only last week I was taken for my youngest son's fiancée.

But I was on the boat going East with Edward, wasn't I? Poor dear Edward! he seems to have got lost.

IX

TRAVELLERS to the East have a saying—it was told me by a rosy-cheeked subaltern—that all prayer-books and bibles go overboard in the Suez Canal. This is true, I think, for I never saw any.

It was baking hot in the Canal! Nothing but blue and yellow to dazzle the eye: yellow sun, yellow sand; blue water, blue sky. The old "Alligator" actually sizzled, and everyone on board looked hot—except myself. I hate looking hot. Women should never look hot, whatever men do. There is no need for it, when *papier poudré* is so cheap. From earliest infancy I have hated the appearance of heat. One should never look what one feels—at least a woman mustn't. The wise woman never looks what she feels. If you see a woman obviously flirting with a man, everything is all right. It is when the woman appears in public to dislike a man that her husband has cause for jealousy.

Edward, being a man, was always jealous at the wrong times. This infuriated me, for I liked Edward, and respected quite a lot of him, and I didn't like him to make such silly mistakes. Of course I didn't correct his mistakes; that would have spoilt the fun.

There was a lot of flirting—quite harmless—

going on, and I was usually a party to it, as I am a good sailor. There was a Colonel of Sappers, quite a good flirt, and completely harmless. He was rather bald, with pinkish eyes—rather rabbity, and a white moustache. He was most attentive—when he got the chance—and quite amusing. I liked him; he was so clever at inventing pretty speeches; I suppose that was why he had done so well in the Engineers. Edward hated him.

Now there is one word of warning that I must write here for the benefit of young wives: "Never flirt with a man between the ages of thirty and forty-five. That is the dangerous age with men—the serious age. If you must flirt, always choose a boy—the younger the better, but they usually prefer widows—or a man over forty-five. Really old men are all right to buy one things and are easily satisfied, quite inoffensive; but so dreadfully tiring!

Colonel S—— was forty-eight—so he said. He looked quite that.

When the heat became really hot, in those days it was the fashion for the men to emerge at night-fall from their cabins with mattress and pillow and sleep on deck. Women, whatever they looked, were not supposed to feel the heat—and oh! how hot some of those poor yellow creatures did look. Consequently they were not supposed to sleep on deck.

Edward held out manfully, but at last our cabin became so appallingly close that he too went on deck to sleep. The first night he sneaked out so

quietly that I didn't hear him. The next night I did.

"Edward!" said I. "Where are you going may I ask?" I didn't know about this deck business then.

"To get a breath of air," said Edward.

"And why that pillow, and that—what have you got there—turn on the light, Edward—a mattress! I do believe you're going to *sleep* somewhere else!"

And then Edward explained all about the deck, and how nice and cool it was.

"All right, I'll come too," said I. "Take two pillows, Edward, and two mattresses."

"You can't!" said Edward, positively, and looking shocked.

"And who says so, may I ask?"

"It's a rule of the ship."

"Rules were made to be broken," said I. And I slipped into my dressing-gown—a perfect duck of a thing, all fichus and real lace.

"Darling, it isn't the thing," said Edward.

"Besides, there are crowds of men up there."

"I believe you are ashamed of me," I said.

I went. Edward, with the mattresses and pillows, led the way. He didn't like it—much—I could see, but he was a soldier and nicely trained to obedience.

We crept up the companion, into the saloon, and out on to the deck. All over the place pyjamad figures were sprawling and snoring. Luckily most of them seemed well asleep.

Edward chose a nice comfy place under a boat

and spread the mattresses; and I slept beautifully. It was lovely and cool after the awful cabin. I don't know what Edward did.

In the early morning Edward woke me. He looked frightfully worried.

"Get up, darling," he said. "The deck hands are beginning to stir."

"What time is it?" I asked.

"Three o'clock," said Edward. He was always a most truthful man.

"Edward, you're a monster! Do you really imagine that *I* am going to get up at three o'clock?" And I turned over to go to sleep again.

Edward positively pranced with rage.

"There's a man coming up *now*," he said.

"He won't *bite*—me."

It was only a sailor, who saluted Edward, and went about his business.

"He never even saw me," I said.

Edward snorted.

I went to sleep again. I hadn't slept so well for nights.

Again Edward woke me.

"What now?" I asked.

"You've got to get up," he said sternly.

"What time is it—*now*?"

"Five o'clock."

"Edward, you're a beast!"

"Oh Lord! Oh Lord!" said Edward. "There's that old brute—coming now——"

I opened an eye and looked. It was Colonel

S—— staggering along with his mattress and pillow, in bare feet, and dressed in a voluminous nightdress, looking for all the world like a mediaeval monk. I laughed—I couldn't help it, he looked so irresistible. He saw me. For a moment I thought he was going to jump overboard, mattress and all. Then he thought better of it, and bowed.

“ Why don't you wear pyjamas like Edward ? ”
I asked pleasantly.

Edward was awfully pleased. As for Colonel S—— for two days he actually avoided me. I never slept on deck again ; for one thing the weather changed, and for another, well, clothes do make such a difference to men.

X

As this is not a diary of my life, but an epitaph to my three husbands, I must skip a great many things that do not concern them.

The voyage ended, as the most delightful of voyages must. Everyone sighed and shook hands, and some looked a little sad, but all eventually went about their business ; and I was left alone in India with Edward : a stranger in a strange land.

India, in those days, was fascinating. To-day it is simply disgusting. In those days Englishmen in India were always gentlemen—they couldn't have ruled India if they hadn't been. Uncivilised people are like unspoilt children, and are wise with all the subtlety of children; it is quite useless trying to deceive them. They have an uncanny instinct in piercing the best of disguises, in looking direct into the heart of things and people. Only civilised, educated people are ever deceived by outward appearances. That is the reason why English women in India always used—after a while—to dispense with disguises, thereby laying themselves open to the nimble wits of Mr Kipling and other lesser lights of the ink world. No man knows his wife. Every child knows its mother. The uneducated Indian can, with unerring instinct, recognise and respect a person—man or woman—who is of gentle birth and reared in a gentle atmosphere. Not so the educated Indian. Our Government, or whoever sends men out to India, is surprisingly shrewd in their choice these days.

As wives and daughters of gentlemen, English women willy-nilly had to be gentle in those days. One quickly learnt the reason and necessity for the colour line. I learnt very quickly in Bombay. One day I was walking with Edward when I was struck by the handsome appearance of a native—he did look splendid in all his Eastern finery, and I said as much to Edward. I don't know whether the man heard me or not, but as he passed he ogled in a disgusting way. Edward promptly

knocked him down and then kicked him up. "Brute!" he exclaimed when he had finished. "A by-product of education."

Now ignorant as I was of the customs of the country, I realised that the man must have done something very terrible for Edward to have done what he did. I watched how Edward treated the natives; and as his treatment seemed to agree with them, I followed suit.

Those were the days when the Indian Government knew how to govern—India. I remember once that because the frontispiece of a London illustrated paper depicted one of our Royalties—a Princess—standing beside some Indian Rajah that particular page was removed before its circulation in India was permitted. In those days white women were respected. If they were not respectable they were politely requested to leave the country. In those days our menfolk were fit to govern, and we did our little best to make them fitting mates.

When first I started housekeeping I found things rather difficult and very new. One had so many servants, who knew that one was new. Naturally they tried to take advantage. One day one of the *johnpanies*, a huge creature, said something as I got into my rickshaw that made the others smile. I didn't know what he had said, but he looked cheeky. Edward was indoors. So I jumped out, and kicked him all the way down the street. I was quite cool. There was rather a commotion, and Edward came running out with an awful look in

his eye. When he saw what was happening, he stopped, and waited for me to finish.

I have shot tigers on foot, with Edward, and have had all sorts of hair-raising adventures, but never did Edward look so proud of me as when I kicked that wretched *johnpany*. And all the time I was thinking how unpleasantly hot I must have looked.

XI

IN the light of experience I know now exactly what was the matter with Edward.

He was essentially a good man—quite the best of my husbands in goodness. By good I don't mean goody-goody. Nothing namby-pamby or psalm-singing about Edward. But he was good. He had decent views about things. His taste in people, in customs, in clothes, in music, in books was good. There was nothing effete, morbid, nor unpleasant in his make up. He did not tell lies; and yet he could forgive other people for telling them. I remember when he once found me out in a little story—a harmless little white lie. I quite expected him to be angry or disgusted, but he said nothing, only looked sad. After that I told him no more stories. Edward believed firmly in God—a thing I was never able to do consistently in those

days. He said his prayers as if he meant them. Not only that but he *loved* God. I liked Edward to love God so long as he loved me *best*. I think he did. He was a splendid soldier, very brave, very loyal, and his black men were devoted to him. But he was jealous, fearfully jealous about me.

Now jealousy is often regarded as a symptom of Love. I used to think it was part and parcel of Love, and I dearly delighted in making Edward jealous. A jealous man is always guessing. He never knows for certain whether one loves him *really* or not. It is a great mistake to let a man know that you love him. In the first place it will make him conceited; in the second he will think less of you. A wife's duty to herself and her husband is essentially to make him love her; to do so, however much she may love him, she must only very occasionally let him catch a glimpse—a mere *soupeçon*—of her feelings.

Most *devoted* wives make fools of themselves in their husbands' eyes. The woman who throws her heart at a man's feet is bound to get it trodden on. Men are such clumsy creatures. Hearts were not made for footstools—at least not women's hearts. No decent woman would tread on a man's heart, however often he laid it at her feet. She might, probably would, poke it with an inquisitive toe to see if it really was a heart. She might, and frequently does, walk away and leave it. Again, she might go down after it into the deepest mud; women have been known to do that. She might pick it up and put it in her pocket, or she might

wrap it up carefully and place it in her bosom, next her heart. All these things are possible. But to jazz on a man's heart is unpardonable! an infallible indication of ill breeding.

The right place for a woman's heart is behind her eyes and close to her brain. No woman is born heartless, whatever men may say to the contrary. If they appear so it merely proves that appearances are deceptive. Many men have called me heartless, when the real trouble with me was that my heart was too big. A big heart needs a big brain to control it; and in those days my brain was rather addled by admiration. At least I am honest.

I love admiration, always have, and I suppose always will. There was a time, oh! what a child I was, when I took other things: curiosity, friendly interest, charity, even physical attraction, for admiration. In those days my poor little mite of a brain was—as I say—addled. I used to think that men disliked brains. I imagined that the only things that interested men were the things that interested me. Beauty, a nice figure, pretty frocks, jewels, dances, tea parties, tennis, polo, I adored; and I thought that men adored them too. Men thought, I suppose, that I was a flirt.

Poor Edward! How patient he was with it all. Very soon I realised that he hated all those things, although he would go with me when he could, which was not often, and always pretend to like them.

By this I don't mean that Edward was a boor. He wasn't, not the teeniest bit. He danced and

played polo remarkably well; in fact he did most things uncommonly well. In the drawing-room he was charming and could always be relied upon to entertain the uninteresting old frumps, ugly spinsters, and *gauche* girls, one and all of whom were devoted to him. I told him so one day after he had been exceptionally nice to a Mrs B——, the Commissioner's wife, whom I hated. He actually swore; and when I expostulated he banged out of the room with a final "Damn!" You see I didn't realise that Edward danced not because he liked dancing but because he liked to dance with *me*; that he admired my frocks because they were *mine*; that he was nice to Mrs B—— because he thought that it would save *me* the trouble of being nice to her. But he was not nice with men, that is not with my men friends.

When I was exceptionally charming to old Colonel A——, because he was Edward's Colonel, Edward became positively rude to him. When I asked him why he was rude, he almost pranced with rage. It was quite useless my trying to explain. If I had known what I know now I would have been rude to Edward's Colonel—he was a silly old man; and then Edward would have been nice to him. But I didn't. The result was that Edward was sent off to some awful place in the plains, where no white woman could live, and Colonel A—— came to tea every afternoon.

I wrote a long letter to Edward explaining that if only he had not been so rude to the Colonel he would never have been sent to that awful place.

In the postscript I pointed out that it would have been far nicer for us both if he (Edward) had been having tea with me instead of Colonel A——.

I didn't hear from Edward for a whole week.

Poor dear, he had no sense of humour.

XII

I WAS never very fond of children—I suppose because I knew so little about them—and it was an awful shock when I first realised that a baby was coming. Edward was divided in his opinions. On the one hand he hated the idea of my having to suffer ever so slightly; on the other he wanted a son—that I could see, although he never said so.

Men like children, and I am not so sure that most men have not more of the paternal than women of the maternal instinct. I had no maternal instinct—something lacking in my make up again I imagine. Edward was a born father. Children always liked him, and he seemed to understand them.

When little John—that was to be his name—was growing to babyhood Edward became fearfully fussy about me. How in the world he knew what I ought and ought not to do, what I ought to eat, and all the oughts and ought nots, I never could

make out. I must say I gave him credit for being "deeper" than I had suspected.

Of course there is a great deal of rubbish connected with this baby business. In the first place everyone thinks it dangerous, and most people are kind enough to tell the expectant mother so. All stuff and nonsense! There are heaps and heaps of worse things in every day life than having babies. To cross Piccadilly on a dark night is far more dangerous to my notion. A woman was meant to bring babies into the world; it is the one thing above all others that she is best fitted for; it is her *métier*. Again it promotes health. A married woman with no children is always ill: if her nerves are not out of order, she is anæmic, or gets pyhorrea, gastric ulcer, or something equally dreadful. Then just look at a childless married woman of forty's figure! Isn't that sufficient proof? Now conjure up all the married women you know who have had families, and look at their figures; and you will see that I am telling the truth. In fact one could say with conviction that: to have children is to be healthy, to preserve one's looks and one's figure, and to remain young. One can't get old with a lot of young things crawling about one.

To produce children properly is an art. Doctors never know anything about it; how can they? It is an art that only healthy women who have healthy children can teach. When some wretched, melancholy-looking old creature gives you advice, don't take it! When she supports her

argument by telling you that she ought to know, because she's buried ten, do the *exact opposite* of what she tells you, and you won't go far wrong.

Oh ! what a lot of nonsense my friends told me about little John. Some said that I ought to stay in bed in the morning ; I tried it, for I hate getting up early, and was frightfully ill. Edward said that I should feel better if I got up. At first I cried and accused him of being unsympathetic. Then I got up ; and blessed him. Others told me that I ought to lie on the sofa with my feet up. It was hot and I felt lazy—one always does on these occasions. So I lay on the sofa with my feet up and made Edward look after me. I felt wretched. Edward said : " Damn these interfering old women ! Come and watch the polo." I went, and felt better. There were others who said that one shouldn't play the piano ; that it was dangerous to lift one's arms ; that one shouldn't walk ; that if one drove something awful might happen ; that to dance was quite fatal ; that to do anything was to run all sorts of risks. In fact it was one long series of DON'TS from my dear friends, aided and abetted by the doctor—rather a nice man, Irish. Now I think I mentioned somewhere that I dislike being told not to do things ; so I did them, aided and abetted by Edward.

Edward was wonderful ; my respect for him increased by leaps and bounds. I wish I could have loved him ; he was worth loving. Edward had a wonderful amount of common sense, a quality then strictly out of fashion ; and he would think every-

thing out for himself. If he had not been such a splendid soldier he would have made a lovely philosopher. Being a soldier, he would take orders, but never other people's opinions. When his Colonel would tell him to do something, he would do it; afterwards he would tell me why the Colonel was a fool. And I must say that Edward was usually right.

Somewhere in the back of my brain I have got a notion that if only more people were to think things out for themselves there would be fewer fools in the world. Sheep are such fools, aren't they?

Edward studied the baby business, studied it not with the cold, calculating brain of the doctor, but with the tender, loving heart of the husband, backed by a well-balanced, open mind. Edward always applied what he called the "Nature test" to everything. One day I was furious because he compared me to a goat—a native goat at that! "There you are," he pointed triumphantly. "There's a mother in embryo for you. Is she lying down? Is she hanging her head and looking miserable? Not she! Just eating, walking, playing, in a natural way; and when she feels tired she stops and rests. Go, darling, and do thou likewise."

Thanks to Edward everything went off splendidly; and little John made his bow upon this stage of the world before ever the doctor appeared with the impedimenta of his trade. He was horribly surprised and looked rather annoyed. "Really, Mrs M——," he said, "this is most unprofessional;

I wouldn't have had it happen for anything. But you look remarkably well, if I may say so?" he added, doubtfully.

I was feeling remarkably well; it was **such** a relief to know that it was all over, and that I had accomplished a real live baby. It was a lovely little thing, like a pixy with its curl of black hair standing up on its forehead. It was as happy as anything, smiling and gurgling to itself, until the doctor smacked it. Just fancy *smacking* a baby that age! And they always do; if the doctor doesn't, the nurse does. And why do you suppose? *To make it cry*. It was beastly of the doctor, and I told him so. He explained that it was the custom, because crying was necessary to make their lungs act. "Do you suppose," I said, "that when I have gone to all the trouble of making it, that its lungs won't act?"

"Well—er—when it cries we know that the lungs are sound."

"A labour-saving device?" I suggested artlessly.

Captain O——, the doctor, smiled. He had a really sweet smile, but he didn't know much about babies.

XIII

FRANKLY I was terrified of little John. He was so small and fragile. To my astonishment Edward wasn't. He would pick him up and play with him as though he had been used to new born babies all his life. It was lucky; otherwise I don't know what would have happened. It's simply awful when one is a mother and hasn't a mother's instinct. Some women have, I suppose; I hadn't. Most women love their babies when they are in the "cuddly" stage; I don't. I prefer them when they are grown up, then they seem to me so much more interesting.

Little John had to be fed, and there the trouble began, for there didn't seem to be anything for him to eat. Said the doctor: "I am afraid, Mrs M——, that you will have to put the baby on a bottle." So I sent the nurse to the bazaar for a bottle. Presently Edward appeared. Little John was bawling manfully; he hadn't had anything for three days. The doctor said that he didn't need food for three days, but little John thought otherwise. "You must feed him, darling," said Edward. I explained. Edward growled something about: "all damned nonsense! the doctor is an idiot," picked baby out of his cot, and brought him over to me. The way he yelled was awful—little John I mean. Poor wee mite, he was frightfully empty. After he had

clawed and scratched me thoroughly and pulled unmercifully at my hair, he snuggled down close and commenced to search blindly for food. Edward came to the rescue. In the middle of it all the nurse, a soldier's wife, appeared with the bottle.

"What's that?" said Edward.

"Baby's food," she replied.

"What food?"

"Condensed milk and water."

"Throw it away!" ordered Edward.

"The doctor says——" began the nurse, all dignity.

"Damn the doctor!" said Edward.

Just then there was a knock at the door, and in walked Captain O——. He stood speechless for several minutes, watching Edward, who was coaxing baby to work for his living.

"Quite useless, Major," he said, rather snappily.

"Who says so?" asked Edward, busy with the baby.

"Well—er—I have come to that conclusion."

"Suppose we were on a desert island," suggested Edward in that peculiarly quiet way he had when thoroughly angry.

"The baby would die."

"All right, darling"—as little John gave me an awful bite—lucky he had no teeth, I thought—he's swallowing," said Edward.

"Air," said the doctor.

John was swallowing, and presently he dropped

asleep. Edward was calm, though I could see he was triumphant; he picked his little son up in his great big gentle hands, and put him back in the cot.

"The baby will starve if you don't put him on a bottle," said Captain O—— presently.

"When he's starving I'll send for you," said Edward.

The next time the doctor came, which was the next day, he still insisted that little John was starving. Edward wasn't there; and the nurse backed him up. It was a very awkward position: doctor and nurse on one side, Edward on the other, and baby and myself in the middle. I didn't know, baby didn't know, I didn't know whether Edward knew or not, in fact I couldn't see how he could know. Presumably the doctor and nurse did know. It would be awful if little John did starve after all.

"Let's wait for my husband," said I.

"The baby is *starving*," said the doctor.

"Downright crool I calls it," said the nurse.

Little John was yelling. I didn't know what to do, for I had fed him only a short while before, and he had taken everything—to the last drop.

I closed my eyes to think—I always think better with my eyes shut.

"Poor thing!" said nurse. "Takin' the very life blood from her."

"Mix the food according to the directions I gave you," said the doctor.

It was awful, for I knew that Edward would be in at any minute.

Nurse was trying to persuade baby to take the

bottle, and the doctor was feeling my pulse, when the inevitable happened. Edward walked in. He surveyed the situation in a glance, strode over to the cot, seized the bottle, and threw it at the doctor.

Of course there was a commotion, but Edward was in command.

Captain O—— spluttered, while nurse ran to wipe his coat—the bottle had hit him on the back, and something had burst.

Edward picked up little John, who was still crying piteously, dandled him for a moment or two, and then began to pat his little back.. An explosion followed. “That’s right, little man, get it up,” said Edward.

The doctor looked at Edward, nurse looked at Edward, I looked at Edward, little John, who had stopped crying, looked at Edward; all with different expressions, and all in silence.

“Air,” said Edward, quite seriously.

Little John did not starve, neither was he put on bottles. On the contrary he prospered exceedingly.

I don’t know what happened between Edward and the doctor, but the next time I saw Captain O—— he was most charming and congratulated me on the appearance of the baby.

XIV

I DIDN'T mind the heat, but baby disliked it, so I made Edward get some sick leave—he was really looking quite run down—and take us all up to S——, where we took a charming little furnished bungalow.

S—— is one of the jolliest places in the world, and it has a lovely climate, one can sit with the window wide open even when there is snow on the ground. It was a pity that Edward couldn't stay; but of course he had his duty to do. Edward didn't like S——; he regarded it as a sort of Sodom and Gomorrah modernised and rolled into one, and tried to give me all sorts of unnecessary advice about what I ought and ought not to do, which was silly of him.

At first I and little John lived very quietly, that is until he grew teeth and needed no more of my provision. S—— is the summer seat of Society, also the favourite seat of Government. S—— was therefore very smart and exceedingly lively. Now I am essentially a Society woman. I love smart society, because, I suppose, It—or rather Its men—folk love me; but one can't play the mother and the society woman at the self same time with any degree of success. So one must choose. I quite realise that most society women prefer society for

themselves and a bottle for baby. I would have done, if it hadn't been for a combination of circumstances and Edward. But it is a great mistake! In the first place the mother of a bottle fed baby becomes "nervy"—naturally, for all the substance which nature has given her to provide for the baby has to be dissipated somehow; and dissipation ruins the nervous system, and makes a woman prematurely old, and consequently ugly. This is a mistake from the mother's point of view, without considering the baby. I can tell the mother of a bottle fed baby as soon as I see her. She is usually very silly and stupid, painfully bony, and always "jumpy." More often than not her husband hates her, and no wonder; I should. In a man's eyes—and I know something about men—there is nothing on earth or in Heaven more beautiful or more lovable than a mother (their wife) nursing her child (their child). It doesn't matter how little that man loved his wife before, *then* he will adore her. Men—men that matter—are curious creatures, and the strongest thing about them is their sense of duty. Such men do their own duty, and expect their wives to do theirs; they can't understand a mother not feeding her child: and if she doesn't—they don't care a button if she actually can't—that woman loses caste in her husband's eyes. A woman who has toppled off the pedestal upon which her husband has placed her might just as well set about earning a divorce—for he will never build her another. If she doesn't, in all probability her husband will. And I, for one, wouldn't blame

him; for that woman doesn't deserve a decent man.

If only we women would realise our power when perched on a pedestal, we wouldn't be so silly as to demand equality with men. Let us make our men build us pedestals, set us up on them, and let us see that we stay there. From there we can rule the world; from there we are the strongest force under Heaven; from there we hold the keys of Heaven and Hell in our hands. On the platform we may be man's equal; on our pedestal we are man's master, certainly; sometimes man's God.

In the old days Englishwomen—pedestal-proud women—knew their power and ruled the Empire. That Empire was great. And such was the cleverness of those women that they allowed their menfolk to imagine that they alone had done that great thing. While they themselves sat on their pedestals and looked sweet.

S—— was the summer seat of the Petticoat Government of India, and oh! what fun that Government was. If only Edward had not been so silly and jealous I would have had him made a Brigadier—at least. But poor dear Edward was awful. He only wanted me on my pedestal.

One can't sit comfortably on a pedestal all day, so it was just as well that Edward wasn't there to see.

There were some lovely men in S——; selected especially for their beauty and nice manners to shoulder the heavy burden of Government and incidentally, in their spare time, to amuse the

Government's wives. Why have ugly men when pretty ones will do just as well?

I had a lovely time, my friend Lady W—— saw to that, for she was a power in S——. I knew everyone worth knowing; and little John was voted a perfect darling, whenever I had him down from his nursery to show him off. Everyone knew that I had given up nine whole months of my invaluable time to him, and I was in consequence held up to all beholders as the model *par excellence* of what a mother should be. No wonder Edward—down in the plains—was envied; and more than ever I realised what a lucky man he was. Sometimes I wrote to tell him so, but it was poor fun, for he always agreed.

Naturally when a certain Prince honoured S—— with a visit, everyone was delighted, and all sorts of levées, balls, receptions, and things on the grand scale were the order of the day. One night there was a grand ball at B——, and everyone who was of any account was there. The Prince sat on a raised dais at one end of the ball-room, from where he could see everyone comfortably. Whenever anyone in particular pleased his eye he would whisper to an equerry-in-waiting, and the latter would intimate to the lady that the Prince desired the honour of dancing with her. He was a dear! and showed remarkably good taste everyone said.

I happened to be dancing with Edward, who had somehow managed to get a few days' leave—I hadn't anything to do with *that*, when the Prince chose me. An equerry came up, bowed, introduced

himself, and delivered the Royal command. Naturally I was awfully pleased, who wouldn't be?

"What's that?" said Edward, getting red about the ears, and looking very stern; he was infinitely bigger than the equerry.

The latter repeated his instructions and offered me his arm.

"My wife is tired," said Edward.

"I'm not," said I.

Edward, obstinate thing, took my other arm. Of course everyone was looking; it was awful! I didn't know what to do. I wanted to dance with the Prince, but I was afraid—the only time I was ever afraid—of Edward; he looked positively dangerous.

"Madame, His Highness is waiting," spluttered the equerry, trying to look extra dignified.

"And I want to go, Edward," said I, trying to disengage my arm.

Edward got very white, and was squinting horribly. The way he tweaked my arm was terrible.

"I suppose you know what this means, Colonel M——?" said the equerry very sternly.

"Go to the devil," said Edward.

I fainted.

.

Next day all S—— was talking about the wretched business. Edward was severely reprimanded by General Sir G—— W——, and sent back to his regiment. Luckily I knew Lady W—— or goodness knows what would have happened. Edward's jealousy was simply disgusting!

The joke of the thing was that afterwards I did meet the Prince; he was very kind and laughed like anything when I told him the story.

XV

AT a certain military station in the North East Provinces I hear that they still tell a story of Delilah and the Turkey Thief. Of course poor Delilah gets badly treated. I think it's high time that the truth were told.

I, Edward, John, and little Evelyn (the latter followed John into the world after eighteen months) lived in a large bungalow with a large compound. Across the compound were the servants' quarters; and we kept all sorts of wild animals, including goats and turkeys. One side of the bungalow, where my bedroom was, faced a wood, about a hundred yards away.

We had been losing turkeys in Edward's absence (he had gone away for a few weeks on some Government mission). So when he came back he determined to sit up and catch the thieves. I went to bed.

Now there was at the station a certain Captain who was doing something in the Indian Survey, making maps sometimes I think. I only knew

Captain C—— very slightly, having met him once or twice. He had a bad reputation, so people said; but he didn't look at all bad, quite good looking in fact, and most amusing. I noticed that he did seem interested in me; but then men always are.

It was hot; and as my window faced nothing but a wood, I used to draw back the curtains when I went to bed, and open the window.

I was always a splendid sleeper, and there was nothing to be afraid of—only a few monkeys who would sometimes pay me an early morning visit. Besides we were close to the General's bungalow.

As I say, I went to bed, with the curtains pulled back as usual; while Edward sat up in his study, which faced the same way, to catch the turkey thieves.

I don't know how it was but as I pulled back the curtain I looked out of the window. It was a lovely moonlight night, and the world outside was alive with strange noises. For a few minutes I looked out with my elbows on the window sill, thinking of nothing in particular, just drinking in the moonlight, when Edward knocked at the door.

Now if it had been as Edward undoubtedly suspected would I have been likely to *stay* at the window?

Edward came in, and of course saw me at the window. He had a gun in his hand.

"Still awake!" he asked in a curiously quiet voice,

"Did you catch your thief?" I asked sarcastically.

"No, but I'm going to; and you are going to help me."

"Don't you order me about, Edward," said I. "You can keep that for the parade ground and black men. How dare you order *me*?" and I stamped my bare foot at him.

He looked at me with a sort of patient, pitying look that I can't stand; makes one feel as if one had done something wrong.

"I hate you, Edward!" I burst out. "Hate you! hate you! hate you! I wish to goodness I had never married you. I'm far too good for you, you old pig. Go away at once. Coming here with your infinite patience sort of air. Go away and say your prayers." Edward always hated it when I laughed about his prayers.

"Look over there," he said sternly, pointing through the window, "behind that big pine tree. Do you see anything?"

If he had argued I shouldn't have looked.

"Why it's—it's——"

"It's a *man*!" said Edward.

"And that white patch looks like, like——"

"A shirt front," said Edward.

"Oh! it's a turkey thief!" and I clapped my hands.

"Come away from the window," said Edward sternly.

"Look! He's moving! He's coming out into the moonlight. And he's got a—a——"

"Pair of opera glasses," said Edward.

I left the window, and seized the curtain. What disgusting brutes men are! And opera glasses!

"Edward, one can't see anything with opera glasses at night can one?" I asked anxiously. I was in my nighty—a very pretty one.

"A night glass I expect," said Edward dismally. Then sternly: "Don't touch that curtain!"

"But, Edward——"

"Not till I tell you." And he began to load the gun.

"You're not going to kill him, Edward?" I asked anxiously; I didn't know who it was.

"Not yet," said Edward. "Now," as he snapped the breech. "Take hold of that curtain—no, don't pull it. Take hold of it gently—like this—and shake it."

"I can't, Edward, it's, it's——"

"Justice," said Edward in an awful voice.

There was no hope for it; I simply had to. Anyhow it *was* a beastly thing to do. And as I fluttered the curtain I wondered who it could be. There was Captain L——; he wouldn't do it. There was Mr O——; far too young. There was Colonel W——; too old, and too fond of his creature comforts. Still I fluttered the curtain. It must be—yes, it must be—I peeped out.

"That will fetch him," said Edward, who was behind the curtain.

"You perfect beast! I shan't do your dirty work! You—you—I'll never speak to you again!" and I turned my back on him. Edward

was a beast! So was Captain C——! I think I cried.

"Here he comes," said Edward, cocking the gun and pointing it out of the window.

"Edward! Edward! You daren't! You'll be hanged for murder! You'll—you'll wake the babies." And I ran to him and caught his arm.

"Go back to bed," said Edward.

I begged him; I implored him; I knelt to him. He was adamant. What I suffered then God only knows. He looked murder, cold, deliberate, diabolical murder.

"You're mad, Edward," I cried.

Bang! Bang!

Edward closed the window; then pulled the curtain. "Got him," he said. "Pleasant dreams!" and he left the room.

That night I suffered mental tortures. Of course the man was dead: and Edward would be hung; and I, and I—oh! it was more than I could bear! It was hideous! ghastly! And I didn't even know for certain who it was. Then I thought of the scandal, and—and perhaps the poor thing wasn't dead. I ran to the window. Nothing! Not a sign of anything. Had Edward already buried the body? I crept to little John's cot, and cuddled him to me for company.

.
Captain C—— was laid up for a long time; and the doctor called every day to pick buck-shot out of his legs. The Mess—one can't keep a

secret in India—christened him “The Turkey Thief.” And I—behind my back of course—was Delilah.

Edward merely laughed; his sense of the ridiculous was disgusting.

XVI

INDIA is an awful country for children—that is English children. In the first place the climate does not suit them, and in the second there are no schools. So I decided to go home. And as a matter of fact I needed a rest from Edward.

There is a great deal of truth in the saying that “distance lends enchantment to the view,” and personally I am quite sure that wives do need a complete rest from their husbands sometimes. Many a temporary separation has saved a divorce. It’s all right when two people are devoted to each other; they find rest in their devotion. But I didn’t love Edward; and recently he had been getting on my nerves horribly with his melodrama and jealousy.

As I mentioned before I used to consider jealousy part and parcel of Love; now I don’t. A jealous husband is great fun when one is fit, but when one has produced two children, and is expecting a third, when one has stewed for three

years in India, and when one has lived at high pressure most of the time, one isn't fit.

Of course Edward didn't want me to go; husbands never do. Fortunately the doctor, Captain O——, was a great friend of mine and very sympathetic. Brown eyed men are always more sympathetic than other men. I made Captain O—— warn Edward, very severely, that if I didn't go home something dreadful would certainly happen. Edward was in an awful state of agitation. Naturally he wanted to come too, and did all he could to get leave. He even wrote to my great friend Lady W——: fortunately I had already written to her.

They wouldn't give Edward any leave—probably because of the Prince episode. He was furious. I actually believe that he would have deserted if I hadn't prevented him. Starvation might suit Edward; it wouldn't me, or the babies; and I told him so.

Poor dear Edward! he cried, actually cried, as he said good-bye. I can see him now, tall, erect, and very distinguished looking, standing on the quay, waving. Little did I realise that it would be the last time that I should see him. If I had perhaps I should have cried too; for he was a big man, far, far too big for me—I'm only five foot one, as I said.

Looking back over the bridge of years I sometimes wonder why Edward loved me so. Perhaps he saw something inside me which was bigger than my little self, something that would perhaps love

him one day, as he loved me. I might have been so different if I had wanted to be, so much kinder; I might at least have pretended to love him more than I did. And yet I doubt if he would have loved me any the more for it. Men are such curious creatures.

Little John was inconsolable without his daddy—for several days. Children are such wise little things, aren't they? They seem to see what we grown up people can't see. I sometimes think that they know so much more than we do.

Edward was a splendid father—far and away the best of my three husbands. I think perhaps because he was so just. Children understand justice, and love it. With Edward there were no distinctions between the two children; both were equal. John was his favourite, I think, but he never showed it. He was wonderful with children; in the nursery he was one of them; I used to cry with laughter to see him romping and crawling about with them. He never told them *not* to do things; for he used to say that to forbid a thing was to instigate the child to do it. Poor dear, he had all sorts of plans for bringing up children, but of course there must be at least *four*—this latter notion was a bone of contention between us. "It's all right for you, Edward, to want four, but I have got to make them," was my argument. Edward, as I mentioned somewhere, was a great student of Nature, and, according to him, Nature's laws were for *our* guidance; I used to think it rather silly. He never would say: "Don't

play with the fire, John," but: "My son, fire burns, and a burn hurts." Of course John tested the truth of these statements at first, aided and abetted by Edward. I remember an awful row we had when John burnt his hand—horribly. Poor little man, he was very brave about it, and between sobs, reiterated: "fire burns, fire burns, daddy says so, and it hurted."

"How did it happen?" I asked.

"Daddy said fire burns and hurted. I said no. Daddy said put your finger in the fire and see. I did, and it hurted. It hurted somefink offul."

Of course I was furious with Edward. Strangely enough little John never got burnt again.

Then Edward had another plan, which really acted rather well. I don't know how he thought of it. Instead of saying: "Don't touch that, or don't destroy that," he would say: "Mummy's or daddy's, or someone else's," as the case might be. The result was that the children were never a nuisance, and could be taken anywhere. When they would start to prowl about a drawing-room, looking for what they might destroy—children are awfully destructive little imps, aren't they?—Edward used to let them alone. If they pounced upon some precious article or other that attracted them, he would say: "Mrs Brown's, or Jones', or Robinson's." That was quite sufficient. And it was really amusing to see them look wise and lisp: "Mrs Brown's," in awe-struck tones. "It will teach them to respect other people's property," Edward would say.

Of course they had their very own possessions too, and with these they were allowed to do just as they liked. Edward was adamant on this point. "Let them break it," he would say, "it's theirs. If you don't want it broken, why give it to them?"

"Excellent in theory, but impossible in practice," I would say, and the *ayah* agreed with me. But Edward always said: "rubbish!"; he was becoming unbearably autocratic in the nursery. I was very glad when I had the children to myself; though I must say they were remarkably good with Edward.

While I am *en vein*, I might as well mention other of Edward's notions on children—these things, very boring I think, are becoming popular for some strange reason, and I *do* want this book to be popular. "There must be no authority in the nursery," was one of Edward's startling theories.

"What about honour thy father and mother?" I asked. I learnt biblical quotations from Edward—most effective! and how he hated them from me.

"Love is the only authority."

"And if they don't love one?"

"Then hand them over to someone who does," said Edward.

"What do *you* mean by love, Edward?"

"Well, er—in this case Justice."

"Can one punish if one loves?" I had him there, I thought.

"Certainly," said Edward. "Justice punishes because Justice is Love."

"Platitudes, and rather hypocritical," said I. And really and truly I think Edward was a bit of a hypocrite—in some things. Anyhow I couldn't understand him.

Then another awful thing about Edward was his idea of Royalty—I believe he got it after the Prince of — episode. "The nursery must be a Republic," he used to say.

"And you a soldier of the Queen! Edward, I *am* surprised. No wonder you get passed for promotion." That used to infuriate him.

"In a true Republic, everyone is equal, men and"—sternly, "women. No: 'John, you first because you are the eldest,' or 'Evelyn, you first, because you are a girl.' Equality in all things; that is Justice. Every week a President should be elected, so that all may learn in turn to administer Justice."

"Suppose they always choose the same one?"

"They won't," said Edward. "Not if they have free choice."

"Then again," he would continue, "the nursery must be run as a common community for all members. There must be no favouritism, no one who happens to be the strongest taking all the toys or sweets."

"That's just what would happen."

"What about yourself, or nurse, or the governess? That is where you come in. You, or nurse, or the governess must be the supreme law, Justice personified. You must be the force moving the community, the force of Love, which

is as I said Justice; and it is your business to protect the weak, and make the strong use their strength for the weak."

And he would go on in this strain until I was bored to tears. One can't be surprised that I was glad to leave Edward.

We had great fun on the boat, one always does—at least I do. Few women realise what an attractive picture a pretty woman with two or three pretty children makes. Men find it simply irresistible! that's why *widows* are so popular. If you want to be really popular with men become a widow. Of course when one's husband is in India, or in some other far-off country, one is almost a widow, in modern parlance one might say a "temporary" widow.

I was very run down after those three years of India and Edward, and I looked fragile and rather prettily ill. Some of the men on board knew Edward, and were jealous of him, so naturally they were nice to me. There was one boy, in the Indian Cavalry, who was charming, and made love so beautifully that I actually did fall in love with him for a time. Lucky I was married, otherwise in a weak moment he might have persuaded me to marry him; and he was awfully poor, poor boy! I hate poverty. It's no use, I simply can't be poor. I must have nice frocks, and expensive hats, and jewels—I dote on jewellery, and flowers, and taxis, and servants. I can't help it. I can't really, it's part and parcel of me. One can't plant

a rose in the desert; it would die. I'm like that. Beastly and mercenary and all that sort of adjective, I know. But there I am, naked and unashamed (bother that bible habit!), and men love me, and three men I have married, and I quite expect to marry again. Three times I have been persuaded into matrimony; but I never sold myself. All my husbands were comfortably off; only one of them was rich—and he wouldn't have been called rich these days.

I loathe really rich men; I don't know what it is, but there is something repulsive about them; they seem to smell of money, probably from their perpetual contact with money. Money was made to be spent, I think. In my younger days money was not mentioned in Society, indeed the mere appearance of money in too great quantities was voted the height of vulgarity. In those days rich men did their best to hide the fact behind an old coat. Society was far pleasanter then; one could meet such charming poor men, such clever, brilliant men of no means, and one could flirt with them, poor fellows! without the slightest danger to either party. It was lovely! To-day, ugh! it is really terribly trying; Society reeks of money, and one has to spend so much more on scent. Dublin Society is the least offensive in this respect; but as an offset Ireland is full of Sinn Feiners. One doesn't know where to go.

XVII

THE one thing against children is that they tend to estrange one from one's friends. This is a nuisance when one has children. People in England are beastly about all children; towards babies their attitude is abominable. Even father, who really seemed glad to see me and allowed me all sorts of amenities from his laws, flew into an awful rage when he heard from mother that I was expecting a small addition to the family.

"You can't have it here, my dear, we haven't the room," was his ultimatum. To which he added: "Why can't you women manage these things properly?"

I was very angry with him, but, naturally, didn't show it. That night I wrote a long letter to Edward, full of adjectives and exclamation marks.

Of course I know now all about restricting the limits of one's family to the desired proportions. But—well, I never could manage it. I have always a sneaking sympathy with young married couples who exasperate their parents by having huge families; somehow it seems natural that they should. And I don't believe that decent people—that is people who love each other, even a little bit, can conscientiously prevent children. Now that poor dear Edward is dead and buried these

many years I often think that there was quite a lot of truth in his theories about Nature. He, poor dear, would have been horrified at the mere notion of deliberately setting out to circumvent Nature; he would have taken to a solitary hill top first. There are, I know, strong arguments in favour of young people without sufficient means remaining childless, arguments from both the woman's and the man's point of view. But, really, it is a mistake, I think. For when the time comes that means do justify the end, then the interested parties discover, to their surprise, that they can't begin. Of course they can adopt someone else's baby, but this is never a satisfactory arrangement, for no decent parents are going to give up a decent baby, are they?

From the paternal roof I went into rooms. Luckily I found a landlady who had had ten children herself and was sympathetic. She was a dear old thing, who had once been "cook to gentry," as she said, so she soon became devoted to me. Unfortunately she and the *ayah* waged an endless racial war, which made things rather uncomfortable.

Then came a cable from Edward that made me alter my arrangements.

He suggested that I should go at once to his mother, who had a large house in the country, and who, according to Edward, would be delighted to have me; and who was wonderful with children.

This required some acute thought.

Now the Italians have a saying that the only

way to get on with one's mother-in-law is to *love* her. I remembered this, and it counter-balanced all the awful things that one had heard about in-laws generally. I should be comfortable—far more so than in rooms; John and Evelyn would have someone to look after them besides the ayah; and last and quite least Edward would be pleased. I somehow thought that I could make Edward's mother love me, if I couldn't love her.

That night—I always write my letters at night in bed—I wrote to her.

By return of post came a lovely letter which caused me to give notice to my landlady, with whom I parted the greatest of friends; one might want to go back there, one never knew.

Edward's mother—I called her mother—was rather like Edward. A pity! She was late Georgian; had been used to living alone, for her husband—an Admiral—had been lost at sea when she was quite young, twenty-five she told me; and she was accustomed to being mistress in her own house. She had been and still was devoted to her husband, and had brought up not only her own family of four, but two other families. The bringing up of other people's children was her hobby. This had prevented her from feeling lonely. Poor thing! she never could have married again; among other things she had a moustache.

Try as I would I really couldn't love Edward's mother. So I set about making her love me. For almost a year everything went swimmingly. "Mother" managed everything—except the *ayah*

who was mine—and the children became devoted to her. She understood children—from long practice, I suppose. Every week she would write a long epistle to Edward, a sort of weekly diary of the children's behaviour and, I suspected, mine.

It was a quiet year, for one thing because I had plenty to do, with Edward the second—the new baby, christened of course by Edward's mother, and for another because no men ever came to the house. Edward's mother did not approve of men.

Edward's brother, who was married, came sometimes, until his wife disapproved. He was an uninteresting creature, very inferior to Edward. She was an awful woman and terribly jealous. Fancy women being jealous! I was never the teeniest bit jealous of either of my husbands. Jealousy in a woman is an infallible sign that she knows that her husband doesn't love her. Silly creature! she ought to make up her mind and her appearance that he shall love her. That's what a woman was made for: to be loved.

Then the time came when little Edward was ordered to the nursery to join his brother and sister; the *ayah* was sent—Edward abetting—back to India; a new nurse, middle-aged, red-headed, and horribly prim was installed in her stead; and I, well I might just as well have been dead. I should have died, I'm quite sure I should, if Edward hadn't gone and got himself killed in a frontier campaign.

I shall never forget the day the cable came. We

were at dinner. I was sitting between Edward's mother and an aunt of Edward's. Edward's mother opened it. Her face grew stern; she took off her spectacles and wiped them on the table napkin; passed the paper across me to her sister; sniffed once or twice; looked at me; and said: "poor child!" "Thy will be done," came from the other side of me. I snatched at the message. And then—oh! I don't know what I did; I felt as if I was going mad. It was so cruel, so sudden; and I am not a Spartan. I don't remember but I think I threw something—the bread or something—at Edward's mother, and bolted upstairs. I wanted to be alone; I must be alone; I couldn't even cry before those hard old Stoics of women.

XVIII

WIDOW's weeds have always suited me remarkably well. Black always sets off golden hair; so I have always mourned my husbands for the full period. I really did feel poor dear Edward's death acutely, and it took me a long, long time to realise that I should have to live my life without him. Little John, who remembered him best, made it still more difficult to forget; he was always asking: "Where's my daddy?" and his great grey eyes would look almost accusingly at me, as though I were responsible. Perhaps—but no, it was Fate

in the shape of an Afghan bullet that took him. He died very gallantly, so his General wrote.

Little John—I always used to call him that, it was his father's name for him—was most fussy and comical when he realised that his daddy was not coming home any more. I used to tell him that his daddy had gone away on a long journey—he understood that, but when Edward's mother would say : “ Your father's dead,” he would shake his curls, stamp his foot at her, and say “ No ! no ! no ! ” Edward's last words to him had been : “ John, my son, take care of your little mother.” And John remembered. He always remembered, and he always did his best to carry out those instructions to the letter; in many ways he was very like Edward. At times this was most awkward.

I was miserable with Edward's mother. We were as far apart as the poles, she and I; and she expected me to emulate her example and live a solitary existence. I might have done, who knows? if it hadn't been for Edward's mother. From morning to night she was preaching duty, duty to her dead son. She practically usurped my motherhood; the children were not mine, but her son's.

Then, to make matters worse, I discovered that Edward had not trusted me. His money, little enough in all conscience, he had left in trust for the children, and the children themselves he had made wards of Court and named his wretched brother as joint guardian with me. To this day

I can't understand his doing such a thing; at least he must have known something of his brother. I can and have forgiven Edward everything but that. That hurt horribly, and I can't forget it.

The final row was over—not a man, though we had many on that score—but a tin of pineapple. Edward's mother insisted that tinned pineapple was good for children; I said it wasn't. She gave it to them; I took it away. The fat was in the fire. She gritted her teeth—an unpleasant habit of hers when angry; I stamped my foot. The red-headed nurse took her part. Edward's brother was called in; he took her part. Next day I left without the nurse and with the three children. Goodness knows how we would have managed if it hadn't been that a friend of mine, a young naval officer, happened to be going that same morning to Southsea.

We went back to my old landlady, who cried over us, and took us all to her bosom—she was very fat. She helped me to find a nurse.

We might have been there to this day if it hadn't been for the Chancery Court. Edward's brother, wretched creature, had influence; I had none—then. He was a most respected member of a dull set of rustics who called themselves "The County;" also he was an M.P.—one of those foolish creatures who look wise and say nothing—except to their wives. I was—goodness only knows what I was by the time he had finished with me. Certainly I was not fit to bring up my own children. The Court, pending a decision, ordered me not to leave England. I hate orders,

and went to Rome. But I soon discovered that my two hundred a year, paid quarterly, was not sufficient. I wrote to father, and he advised me to come home; his letter contained a cheque for twenty pounds—generosity was never his strong point, as I think I mentioned.

However I stayed in Rome, very quietly in cheap rooms. I knew Rome and could speak Italian, as father had had my voice trained there. But Rome is Rome, and expensive. I pawned, yes actually pawned a lot of my jewellery, when to my horror my quarterly allowance failed to appear. Edward's brother, horrid animal, was also my trustee.

It was a disgusting position! I owed bills everywhere—I must say the Italian shopkeepers were most obliging people. I always used to take them into my confidence—needs must when the Devil drives—and they never failed me. I even owed nurse money. Dear nurse! she was a treasure. She is the proud possessor of a milliner's shop in the West End now, a most important lady! but she is never important with me. Perhaps because I—well Roger (my second husband) lent her a little money to open her shop, a tiny affair in those days.

Then I remembered my voice—the best voice in all India Lord L—— had said. I went to my old master who was luckily still alive, Signor M——, and told him my sad story. He was delighted, and hugged me. A dear old man! I might have been something wonderful in opera, if a curious thing hadn't happened.

One night when I got back from the opera house—Signor M—— had got me a small part—I found a card lying on my table which read: Captain Roger O——, I.M.S. I think I have mentioned Captain O—— before; he was the doctor at D——. Nurse, who always used to sit up for me, was fearfully excited and scented Romance. She is still most romantic, poor thing, being unmarried; and even now weaves the most wonderful tales round the customers who order their trousseaux from her. "The gentleman was tall"—I always like tall men, because I am so small myself, I suppose, "and so good-looking, with curly black hair and brown eyes, and very clever-looking. And"—clasping her hands—"he was most excited like, and said, 'found at last' just as they does in novels. And——"

"And what else, Tiny?" I asked—I always called her "Tiny," she was so big.

"And he asked all sorts of questions about you, ma'am."

"Oh," said I. "Did he. What then?"

"And he told me that he was lookin' for you for months and months, that he had almost lost all hope when he happened to see something in the paper about a law case about Master John and Miss Evelyn. He *was* surprised to see baby."

"Did he ask to see the children, Tiny?" There was something rather attractive about Captain O——.

"Yes; and"—Tiny's eyes began to glisten unnaturally—"he kissed them, and Master John

woke up and said, ' Daddy '—and wasn't he just pleased ! ”

“ Who ? ”

“ The gentleman, ma'am.”

“ Tiny, I'm tired,” I said.

“ He's coming round at eleven o'clock to-morrow. He wanted to come earlier, but I said that you'd bound to be tired, poor little lamb ! ”

I was dead tired; but I couldn't sleep for a long, long time. When I did, it was to dream of poor dear Edward. Dreams are such funny things, aren't they ?

NUMBER TWO

ROGER

I

CAPTAIN O—— had not altered much. He was an awfully nice boy and only a few years older than myself. Really and truly he was ever so much younger. I suppose there could never have been a man more unlike Edward.

Edward was English with a dash of Scotch; Captain O—— was a typical Irishman. Edward had grey eyes, earnest eyes that could look a little pathetic sometimes, sometimes a little angry; but very seldom, for Edward seemed to have his eyes under control. Captain O—— had brown eyes, eyes that laughed one moment and looked positively pathetic the next, great big limpid brown eyes, almost mysterious-looking under the long lashes. It was a pleasure to watch Captain O——'s eyes, for there one could see all the workings of his mind. He was very clever; brilliant I might say.

An Englishman is such a simple soul; he thinks simply and acts simply. He is always just, always impartial, a self-centred creature who seems immune to emotions, uninfluenced by his surroundings. That is the reason, I suppose, that an

Englishman is always respected, and never loved; why he can rule, and be ruled. An Englishman is big, never great; logically clever, seldom brilliantly illogical. I always think that the Romans must have been very like the English. Art and music are impossible to an Englishman, and when he becomes artistic he seems to go to pot. His sphere seems to be to steady other people. He is the ballast of the world—rather uninteresting—I think.

But the Irishman, oh! how different. Nothing simple about him. A creature of moods and subtleties, swayed by the very atmosphere around him. Not a man, but a will-o'-the-wisp, at the mercy of every wind that blows. Triumphant, brilliant, sparkling one moment; abject and utterly miserable the next. I would hate to be ruled by an Irishman, but to be made love to—*Mon Dieu!*

Edward and Captain O—— had only two points of resemblance. Both were tall, and both loved me.

It was delightful to meet an old friend from India; and how we chattered and laughed—laughed till the tears came—of little people whom we had known, and little things. With Edward it was always the big things that mattered.

Captain O—— respected Edward as one always respects something that one cannot understand. He spoke of him as a child might speak about the moon, rather wonderingly, a little wistfully. He never could understand why I had married Edward; which was not surprising. "You remind me of a

butterfly resting in the shadow of a great granite boulder," he had once said. Then he had laughed: "Presently the butterfly will want to fly away to the flowers and the sunshine."

We talked a great deal about Edward. Captain O—— was with him when he died. Poor dear Edward had been shot through the lungs and had fought death grimly for many days. His last words had been typical: "O——, you are fond of my wife—no offence—but you are, everyone is. You are a good chap, O——. Take care of my little wife." And then he died. "A big man!" said Roger, tearfully, very tenderly. Then whimsically: "Too big and too good for you and me."

Then he showed me a photograph of the grave, with its plain granite cross and the inscription: "Here lies a man." "I had it done myself," he said. "Somehow I thought you'd like it. Rather original, isn't it?" He was an understanding man, Roger.

Of course he stayed to lunch, and the children were delighted with him, because, I suppose, he had brought them a large package of toys and sweets. Most thoughtful of him, I thought. And oh! how he made me laugh; he was like a tonic. He described how he had—"wangled," my son calls it—leave from the Colonel; how already he had had two extensions on full pay. "I am ill you know, heart!" (I could see he was); how he had scoured all England, having lost Edward's mother's address (just like him!); how he had paid a visit

to Edward's brother and asked to see *his* wife, under the impression that it might be *me*. "I announced myself as a friend of Mrs M—— from India," he explained, "quite expecting to see you. And then—oh Lord! what a woman. They say he drinks. I don't wonder"; how they had been most "sniffy" to him. Said they didn't know where I was; that they had heard that I was something on the stage—"just what *she* would do," loud sniff—this from Edward's brother's wife; that I was—well that the Court was looking for me. "That last rather frightened me," said Roger. "One never quite knows what you might be doing. Then I met some old friends in town, and we had a very gay time."

"And you forgot all about poor little me?"

"Oh! no, you were there—I couldn't forget you—in the back of my mind, that's all."

"And how did you find me?"

"Well I saw an account in the 'Times,' quite by accident, that the Chancery Court had given the custody of the children to your brother-in-law. And do you know they know all about you," he added. "Must have had detectives after you."

"Brutes!" I said.

"I got your address from them, said I had important papers from your husband. Then I caught the first boat train; and here I am."

"Now what are we going to do?" I asked. "What would *you* advise?"

"Well—er—suppose we send the children to the nursery."

I rang for nurse—it was their sleepy time. Roger shook hands with her, and kissed all the children. He was always rather fond of kissing.

II

I WASN'T in the least in love with Roger, but somehow he swept me off my feet. His lovemaking was like a tornado, crushed all resistance out of one, and left one rather limp and exhausted. Then again he was very crafty. "If you marry me," he said, "then I, as your husband, can fight the Court for the children. My father's a Judge—decent old buffer—and he'll be useful. They can't take away *my* character."

"What about ways and means, Roger? I can't marry a poor man—at least not a very poor one. You know that."

"I'm not rich," said Roger. "I've got eight hundred a year, besides my pay, and expectations when the old man hops the twig, and——"

"And I've got two hundred."

"And three children."

"Heaps!" said I.

"Quite enough," said Roger.

We both laughed.

And then we forgot all about money.

III

ROGER was a Roman Catholic. Goodness knows what I was; I hadn't worried about such things. I always think Church-religion should belong to the old. What on earth is the use of bothering about a future life, when one's only just begun to live in the present. Orthodoxly-religious people always seem to miss so much. They believe in a wonderful God, Who made the world; and in the same breath they condemn what He made. This seems to me silly to say the least of it.

Of course I was born and educated in the Church of England—I think that's the right expression. I had been baptised in the presence of various godfathers and godmothers—carefully selected by father with a view to their future utility I suppose; dragged to church on Sundays—a gloomy place which I hated almost as much as I did the dentist's; confirmed in due season by a stout Bishop, who made me want to giggle; and that was all.

Roger made rather a fuss about his being a Roman Catholic; Roman Catholics always do. They seem to consider themselves rather select, and I am quite sure that they believe, most devoutly, that there is a special little Heaven set

apart for them somewhere. Roger was very much in love with me, which I think I mentioned before, and he seemed to imply that I was in danger of not going to his Heaven unless I became a Catholic. "Then I suppose I shall go to where Edward is," I sighed. That made him redouble his efforts to convert me.

I was an easy convert; Roger was rather boring when he talked religion. So I was received into the Church by a charming old priest. It was quite easy, really, but I was rather confused I remember by the mortal and the everyday sins; I think it's wonderfully clever the way they have separated them, and it makes confession so simple—if one doesn't forget at the critical moment. But oh! how I would hate to be a priestess—I suppose we shall be having them soon, now that the man shortage is getting so acute. Just fancy listening all day long to people's petty little sins; rather sickening! A really interesting mortal sin, something thoroughly bad, must be a relief. But I don't think people confess their bad sins, at least I wouldn't. One can't sin badly by oneself, and I don't think it would be loyal to confess somebody else's sin. I love loyalty. Men are almost always loyal; very few women. There's something big about loyalty. I don't mean just loyalty to a king, but to one's friends. It's fine to know that you can count on your friend, no matter what you do; that if you are on a pedestal he will be there with smelling salts, in case you get giddy; and that when you fall off, he will be there to pick you up. Just

fancy if women were loyal like that! Mr Lloyd George wouldn't have to scratch his head so over the new world, would he? I do wish I could be loyal, like that. But loyalty is somehow or other mixed up with love; and I've never been in love for very long. However, I suppose that there is hope for one becoming good sometime, when one can appreciate good—in others, I mean; for myself I find it so difficult.

Between the interval of being converted and getting married I made a discovery that very nearly postponed the wedding indefinitely: Roger was not nearly as good a man as Edward. That is the one trouble about having more than one husband, it's quite impossible to prevent oneself comparing them; and everyone knows that comparisons are odious and that the dead are bound to get the benefit of the doubt. Roger told lies. Now I tell lies, beautifully, and I always know when people are telling lies, beautifully; the only time I am ever taken in is when people tell lies badly. If Edward had ever wanted to tell me a lie, he would have stuttered and stammered, hummed and hawed, coughed, and got red about the ears. Then I should have looked at him and said: "Edward!" in a tone of horror; and he would have told the truth—or at least I should have taken it to be true, whatever he might have said. A bad liar lies badly because he is in two minds, and one can see the tussle going on in his face. A good liar is nicely past the tussle stage.

Roger was a beautiful liar.

One day little John, feeling about in Roger's pockets for sweets, pulled out a letter. Now I am observant as well as intuitive. Obviously it was an old letter; equally obviously it was written by a woman—young; also it came from his left hand, inside, breast pocket—the pocket in which men carry about their treasures: photos, cheque books, pocketbooks, and love letters.

Roger never turned a hair. What is more, deceitful wretch! he picked the letter up from the floor and with the utmost *sang froid* threw it into the wastepaper-basket—meaning no doubt to recover it later on. For if he had wanted to throw it away he wouldn't have treasured it for weeks certainly, if not for years, would he?

Now Edward under similar conditions would have looked uncomfortable and put the letter back in his pocket. That would have been at least honest and loyal to the lady.

I looked at Roger and smiled. Roger looked at me, with the sweetest expression imaginable. I looked at the letter in the wastepaper-basket.

"A beastly bill," said Roger.

"It looks very old," I said.

"Haven't worn this coat for years," said Roger.

"It looks quite the latest style," I said, sweetly. That had him cornered, I thought.

"Men's fashions don't change much," said Roger.

"It looks more like Bond Street than Bombay," I said. Roger, I must explain, had gone to India

when quite young and had spent his leaves in India. That I knew.

"I always leave a lot of my kit with King & Co.," said Roger. He was a fluent liar.

"Were you born in India? And did you run up bills when you were so very young?" I asked. The envelope had an Indian stamp, and intuition told me that an Indian bill could scarcely have got into the pocket of a coat c/o King & Co. Besides it *was* a woman's writing.

Roger lowered his eyes for a moment to think unobserved. "What a fuss about a beastly old bill," he murmured after a short pause. Then: "Here, see for yourself if you doubt my word." And he actually made a movement towards the wastepaper-basket!

"Roger, why tell lies to me? So soon," I added pathetically.

He stopped short, and began to pull his moustache.

"Who is the woman?" I asked sternly.

"It's that—well you wouldn't know her—she's after your time," said Roger. "Anyhow she's in the wastepaper-basket now." And he laughed.

IV

It wasn't that I minded so much about Roger being a liar, for I knew that I could make him truthful; one liar can always cure another. It was his lack of loyalty. I suppose he thought that I would be jealous. Little he knew about me!

Roger received my long sermon on loyalty rather nicely and quite submissively. So I forgave him. He was such a baby, really, and I felt sorry for him. Before we were married he gave me a full account of his indiscretions, down to the smallest detail. I do believe he wanted to shock me, silly creature! Of course I pretended to be very shocked, but afterwards—when I was alone—how I laughed; they were such innocent little indiscretions. I wonder what he would have thought if I had laid bare my—what is it that makes one sin, I wonder? certainly not one's *soul*—to him.

We were married very quietly, and I did *not* make the children bridesmaids and pages. Personally I think it is a loathsome habit to make the children of one's former husband or wife, as the case may be, perform at one's wedding with number two, three, or four as the case may be.

I don't care how fashionable it may be. I think it beastly!

I suppose that I am a strange woman, rather unique in some ways, but I won't be tied down by any silly fashion just because it is popular and is labelled *the fashion*. I am not going to make myself look hideous to please anybody. I know what suits *me*, and I don't care a rap what suits other women. I have always been myself, and have no intention of becoming one of a herd.

Most women are like sheep. They are afraid of being different to their sisters. Not I. My chief joy in life is to be different. Men say: "how different you are to other women"; they are quite right, I am—outwardly at all events. Men love women with their eyes, and the clever woman will always set a feast before her husband's or lover's eyes; it is far more appreciated than a good dinner—whatever the wiseacres may say—besides one can always hire a good cook, even to-day, if one has tact, and is nice to the cook.

There was a time when I used to smoke; very few women did it then—daintily. I don't smoke now.

Of course one mustn't force one's opinions upon other people; that is not policy, and besides it is frightfully boring to have people preaching *at* one. A preacher is never popular unless he preaches popular opinions. Christ was crucified because he was unpopular; our modern prophets seldom make the same mistake. The way to get people to imitate you is to do things nicely; and one doesn't mind being followed by a few intelligent

people—at least I don't. Sheep won't follow anyone; they have to be driven. So we can leave Fashion to "lead" sheep, can't we?

Poor million man-less sisters, you will realise one day that Fashion was only invented by the greedy people who sell you clothes, and hats, and things to make you buy new ones before the old are even soiled. A splendid idea when one has a stingy husband to foot the bills. Thank goodness none of my husbands were stingy; I shouldn't have married them if they had been.

Roger was frightfully generous, and I really began to get quite frightened at the way he spent money. No lakes, nor rocky mountains played any part in our honeymoon. Roger knew more about women than poor dear Edward.

Looking back, my married life with Roger was not unlike a protracted honeymoon, that is until we settled down in Harley Street. Then it became a—but I am getting ahead of the story. From Rome we went to London. There I had quite a turn, for one day—we were staying at B——Hotel, South Kensington, an awful object in a top-hat appeared and demanded to see me. I saw and heard him from the lounge, and bolted upstairs. I told Roger to go and see who it was—I didn't know the name on the card. After a while Roger returned. "They have sent about the children," was all he said.

"Is it the Court?" I asked anxiously. I have a horror of Courts—nasty low places!

"It's your brother-in-law's solicitor," said Roger.

"Tell him to go away."

"I have," said Roger, "but he won't."

"Give him some lunch," I said. "And, Roger, plenty of whisky. Solicitors always drink."

While they were at lunch I and nurse took the children in a closed cab round to H—— Gardens, where an aunt of mine lived. Aunt Matilda had a heart only slightly turned but not actually soured by her man-less existence. I was persuasive and rather tearful so she took the children in. I left Tiny in charge with explicit instructions.

When I got back to the Hotel, pleased at the present, but rather fearful of the future, I was told by the manager that Roger and the "gentleman" had gone out together in a hansom; the manager was a little foreign so I forgave him his description of Edward's brother's solicitor, foreigners so often judge people by their hats.

I spent the afternoon in making and unmaking plans. I was not going to lose my children, whatever the Law said about it. The children were mine, made by me and Edward. I remember wishing very much that Edward had been alive; he was always such a pillar of strength, and if he had been with me there would have been none of this bother. Somehow I couldn't rely upon Roger to the same extent. I began to wonder what had happened to Roger; he should have been back long ago. Certainly he had been rather

clever in getting rid of the solicitor, nasty creature!

I detest solicitors, lawyers, barristers, judges, and everyone connected with the Law, somehow they always make me feel wicked, and they never seem to me to be men, they are always so wooden. Not so very long ago solicitors were not considered respectable, and my Uncle Sir G—— T—— used to say that the proper place for them was the servants' hall; but then he really did hate them; he used to say that lawyers were responsible for three quarters of the trouble in Ireland and at least half of the trouble in the world. But they got their own back when he died; for he made out his will himself and left everything to his wife because "she is the person most fitted to administer the estate," I think it went. Anyhow the Law stepped in and proved that she wasn't fit, and appointed two lawyers to administer it. Poor Uncle G——! I wonder that he hasn't tried to communicate his views through Sir A—— C—— D—— or someone.

Talking of the Law, I have been working very hard on the question of women lawyers. At least they wouldn't be so wooden. Another thing I am in favour of—I have written to the Labour Party about it—and this is the nationalisation of lawyers, barristers and all their ilk. They ought to be nationalised; then the Law wouldn't be such a popular profession. Of course there would have to be a Controller, and I should like to see a man like Mr G. K. C—— appointed. He would be far more amusing than Justice D——, and ever so

much more imposing than Lord what's his name who used to be Sir F. E. S——, and somehow one knows he would be honest; and honesty is rather necessary to the Law, isn't it? or at least it ought to be.

I am afraid I *am* becoming a bit of a politician these days. If I don't marry again soon I think I shall have to go into politics. I did speak once in the Albert Hall—I forget what it was all about—it was great fun, and everyone was very amused. I must say that I think Politics a little more respectable than the stage.

I was in bed when Roger arrived. He was in very high spirits—in fact most exuberant. He never got sleepy after staying up late like some men do.

"Why didn't you stay out all night?" I asked him.

He looked indignant. "A nice way to welcome your obedient husband," he grumbled.

"I told you to give him lunch, not tea and dinner and supper as well."

"Didn't you say plenty of whisky?"

"He must have been extra wooden."

"He was," said Roger. "But I—is there a syphon of soda anywhere? I fixed him."

"What happened?" Roger was always interesting even at midnight.

"Well, I gave him lunch and two or three whiskies and soda, and a bottle of the boy, and a liqueur brandy or two, and then he became rather amusing; told me he hadn't been to town by him-

self for years. Remembering your instructions, darling, I gave him his head. Phew! how the old buffer did travel. Goodness knows where we haven't been—nowhere respectable. I was afraid I might run into friends and then where would our reputation have been? "

" Very considerate of you, Roger. Go on."

" I don't believe the fellow was a solicitor at all."

" Roger! "

" I've been thinking it over, and I believe he must have been a detective."

" Roger! "

" Employed by poor dear Edward's delightful brother to detect——"

" What, Roger? "

" My character."

" Oh, Roger! did you do anything *very* dreadful? " I asked, when the shock had subsided.

" Well that depends on what one calls dreadful. It wouldn't be considered anything in Ireland, or for that matter in any decent Society."

" Roger! "

" You see he became dreadfully drunk and rather a nuisance—wanted to fight, so I knocked him down, smashed in his topper, and gave him in charge for assault and battery—the bobby was Irish."

" Roger, do you know that in some respects you are rather like poor dear Edward," I said.

Roger looked doubtful.

“ Don’t you remember when he threw the feeding bottle at you? ”

Roger said damn two or three times.

V

I GOT an extension of leave for Roger, a cheque from father—after talking steadily for two hours, and for two months we made the Chancery Court look blue. It was glorious! Tiny, who was splendid, and the children enjoyed themselves tremendously; so did I and Roger—at least I think Roger did. Of course he was fretting to get back to his profession, but he couldn’t with the children’s future so unsettled. We travelled extensively. Usually Roger was Tiny’s husband and took two of the children, and I was the lonely widow with one. Then as bad luck would have it the children got scarlet fever; and we were found out. We were allowed to nurse them back to health, and then they were carted away to Edward’s mother. It was awful! and naturally everyone was fearfully upset—except the children, who thought it was a great joke, poor little mites. Roger was very kind, and took me off to Monte Carlo to “ drown my sorrow,” he said. Goodness knows where he got the money from.

I was wild, and when a woman is wild she

becomes rather fun. Roger was in high feather. We did everything. Every night we gambled; and I think Roger became rather frightened. I love gambling; dreadful isn't it? It isn't the money that attracts me, but the excitement. I don't know anything more exciting than roulette. Of course I never could play a system—only money grubbers do that. I like to think of a number and put a lot of money on it. They say people who are lucky in love are unlucky at gambling. Rubbish! I am awfully lucky at both. One night I won eight hundred pounds. Something told me that number seven would win, and I put all my remaining louis on it; and lost. Still something whispered "Seven." I took Roger's winnings—he was far too cautious and quite English when he gambled—and made a cross of louis on number seven. Roger was rather shocked I could see. The croupier spun the wheel, and the little ball rolled merrily into number seven. It was delicious! Again I made a cross—much bigger—on number seven, and again it won. Three times I won! Then I made Roger collect my winnings, and I stood him a really good dinner at the Hotel de Paris. Poor fellow he needed it, for he had been dreadfully worried about money for several days, telegraphing all over the place. I don't believe he had enough to pay the Hotel bill.

I got Roger more leave; I knew someone at the India Office; and really Roger was rather run down.

Then something happened that changed our lives completely. Roger's aunt died, and left him a tremendous lot of money, a property in Roscommon—awful place, and a house in Dublin. Naturally he couldn't go back to India; and as a matter of fact I had no intention of going back there, whatever Roger did, for the climate is very trying to one's complexion—that is to a woman's complexion; men's don't matter. So I made him resign his commission.

We went to Dublin and everyone was charming. Roger's father was an old duck. Dublin Society is or was the best in the world. They didn't bother about money when one had other things—breeding especially. The Irish are very particular about breeding—even in their horses, and people of decent family are looked up to even if their houses are tumbling down, their gates unpainted, and their harness tied up with bits of string. Roger's family was very old and very Irish, so it would have been all right in any case. My family was old too, but mixed. A great great great grandmother had been French, and we had a splash of Irish somewhere. At all events the Irish in me carried the day; and Roger was considered—quite frankly and openly—they always do things openly in Ireland—to be a very lucky Irishman. I think he was.

Roger was not, naturally, a jealous man; far too free and easy. So I had to make him jealous. If I hadn't goodness knows what might have happened; for Dublin women are lovely. If I was

a man I would marry an Irish girl. There is something so alluring about them, and I am quite sure that they can love tremendously. Then again they are so loyal to their friends and are never catty.

Irish men too are charming, not quite so polished perhaps as Englishmen, but more gallant, and far more daring. An Irishman makes love as if he meant it. It doesn't make a pennyworth of difference whether he is married or single, or whether one's husband is close at hand, if an Irishman admires one he says so, and quite simply. One can't be offended; neither can one's husband. I am speaking of course of the *pukka* Irish.

Heaven protect me from the mercenary wretch whose ancestors immigrated from Scotland, because they found it easier to make money in Ireland. They aren't Irish at all, however long they have lived there; they are Scotch—pure and simple perhaps, but far too canny and clanny and serious for my taste. Poor dear Edward had a little Scot in him, but not enough to hurt.

It is the fashion these days to air one's views on Ireland. Not that I am doing it for that reason, but because I do know a little about Ireland, and after all I married an Irishman. And to know a man one must marry him.

The trouble with Ireland is very simple, so simple that our astute politicians have always overlooked it. The Scotch, not the English, are the mischief. The English can rule. The Scotch can't. Englishmen are impersonal creatures, who instinctively look down on other people, but they

are never small nor clanny. The Scotchman says : " a mon's a mon for a' that," but he means a Scot. An Englishman is tolerant of other people's opinions, however stupid he may consider them. A Scotsman is the most intolerant creature on the face of the globe; no matter where he goes he carries his customs and religion and accent with him, and does his worst to cram them down other people's throats. Edward was horribly intolerant, really, and he was only half a Scot.

To this day the Scots say that our king is really Scotch. What *can* one do with such people?

Ulster may be a part of Ireland geographically, but in reality it is a Scottish settlement. If they had been willing to tolerate and show respect—even if they didn't feel it—for Irish customs and Irish laws and Irish religion, everything would have been all right. But not they! Strangers in a strange land they set out to dominate Ireland. Being Scotch they worshipped money almost as much as the Jews. In fact if you want to thoroughly enrage a Scotchman ask him how many Jews there are in Scotland. There was one once, the story goes, and he, poor thing, never could make enough money to leave the country. I believe he is dead.

Why should people be forced to worship money if they don't want to? That is my argument. The Irish like money to spend; if they can't make it or borrow it, they starve, quite decently and without offending anybody. An Irishman loves his country and his home and his wife and his

children and his horse and his cow and his pig and his chickens. If he can grow enough grass and potatoes and corn to supply all his belongings—and provide an occasional drop of the “creature”—he is supremely satisfied. So, curiously enough, is his wife. A Scot loves himself first, then money. His home is anywhere where he can make money—to save. His wife is the finest porridge maker in existence. His country is something to talk about over a hot toddy; his horse—if he has one—is something to earn him money; he may even keep a sheep dog, but it is to drive his sheep until they are ready for market. One can't picture a Scotsman with a pet lamb.

Send the Ulster foreigners back to Scotland and England will rule Ireland for ever.

I don't mean that the Irish love the English; they don't—emphatically. But they do respect them, and would be quite content to be ruled by them. In his heart of hearts an Irishman trusts an Englishman, as much as he distrusts and hates a Scotsman. To send a Scot to Dublin as Secretary of State is to goad the Irish into sheer desperation. A desperate Irishman is awful; there is nothing he won't do. He will kill and murder and even maim cattle—and he loves livestock. But he won't stoop to steal. His point of view; and we must understand his point of view if we wish to continue to rule him. It's no good blaming him, or killing him, or putting him in prison; that only makes him worse, makes his sense of injustice rankle more. And Ireland is

suffering from a keen sense of injustice and that is that England is helping the Scotch to oust them from their own country.

I could rule Ireland, and I am only an English woman. How? Well I love the Irish; and Irish people always love me. Roger would have died for me.

VI

ROGER was a great ladies' man; most Irishmen are. If he hadn't been a brilliantly clever Brain Specialist he would have made a splendid Society Entertainer. Most people can do two things well, can't they? And really I think people were meant to do two things; it isn't reasonable to suppose that anyone was meant to do one thing all the time. I have always pitied the poor dustman, for example; it must be awful having to cart about other people's refuse all day long! Then the miners, just fancy digging out coal all day! and how black the poor things must get. I have sometimes wondered, when my face was being massaged or my hair done, what sort of a miner I would have made if I had been born a man and the son of a miner. Honestly I believe that I would have become a policeman or a burglar. No wonder the poor things go out on

strike; and no wonder they get drunk—if they can.

In spite of all this talk that is going on about the New World which Mr Lloyd George is going to make, it seems to me that no one understands what is really necessary. I know I am only a woman and not expected to know anything, but still one does think now and again, and I am certain that Work is at the bottom of all the trouble. The happy people I have known are men who love their work. Edward loved his soldiering, Roger positively enjoyed lunatics, and George my third husband (to appear in Part III) delighted in killing things. That was work number one. Then they all loved me; work number two. Most professional men love their work, and I suppose professional women do too, but I have rather avoided them, so I can't say. Then most sailors love the sea; soldiers love the Army—otherwise they would desert. I have known many shopkeepers who obviously took a huge delight in selling things. I remember going into the stokehold of a ship once and I am quite sure the Engineer—a Scot—loved his engines from the way he patted and polished them. A mining engineer friend of mine bores me to tears with his descriptions of rocks and minerals and things; he must love them. So I don't see why everyone shouldn't love his work. Of course the trouble starts when a boy is made to follow a certain trade—probably his father's. I know what boys are. I've got three of my own—at least I had; one, I

can't believe that he's dead even now. I've got his Military Cross somewhere—nasty thing! I can't bear to look at it, it seems like his price. As if they could pay for *those* boys! boys who went so bravely and died laughing. Oh! those disgusting hypocrites, men and women, who boast that *they* gave their sons. My son was never mine to give, besides he just went; all I did was to be brave, to hide anything that might have hurt him. I was proud of him, yes; am still proud, proud as an artist must feel as he remembers the masterpiece that his hand produced and which he sent to market. For pity's sake let us be frank and say that we sold our sons, sold them to buy our own safety; sold them because we had taken no steps to secure that safety.

Boys must never be forced into anything, otherwise they will hate their work and be unhappy. Of my boys, little John chose to die for his country; Edward was too young—thank God—and he has chosen the pulpit—it's *his* choice. I never could stand preachers and I shan't go to hear him. Perhaps he will be a Bishop—he certainly seems to love his trade—that is if there are still Bishops then. George—but I am getting rather forward with my story.

As I mentioned before, Roger was a great ladies' man; he couldn't help himself, poor fellow. He loved women—all women, almost as much as I love men, so we were well matched. Now the easiest kind of man to manage is a ladies' man, but one must go about it in the right way. There are some

women married to ladies' men who get silly and jealous when their husbands stay out late, or are kept at the office, or do the hundred and one things that ladies' men do. Others are rather proud of their husband's achievements and seem to delight in taking a back seat among the pots and pans, keeping him well fed, and picking up any stray crumbs that may happen to fall from his table.

Both these methods are wrong, and are bound, sooner or later, to end in disaster.

My recipe is very simple. Find out what it is in the other woman that attracts Charlie, or Harry, or William, and cultivate her carefully. That done, set to work to beat that woman at her own game. It's quite easy if you have brains.

Most men are simple creatures and at heart far better than we women. The average man is easily satisfied; poor dear Edward was, and he was far above the average. The really difficult creature is the brilliant man. There is no average brilliance; it is something to which no law of averages can apply; it's worse than Luck. A brilliant man is like a pendulum, right up and right down, always swinging, never stationary.

Roger in some moods was splendid, capable of wonderful things. When he was in these moods I appreciated him tremendously; then he was almost lovable, certainly attractive. At other times he was a beast. It was in his beastliest moods that he paid attention to Mrs de J——.

Now this Mrs de J——, I don't believe it was her name at all, was not even admitted to any decent

Dublin Society, although she was notorious. Of course to-day she would have been welcomed anywhere; Smart Society nowadays consists of such a miscellaneous conglomeration of notorieties, doesn't it?

Being a doctor, Roger practised when other people felt like it; and his practice took him to all sorts of places. It took him, so he said, to Mrs de J——, a gratuitous piece of information for which I never asked and which I did not believe.

I happened to be walking with Mr J—— O'B——, dead now poor fellow, most charming. We were quite out of the beaten track when we met Roger and Mrs de J—— in a jaunting car. Roger saluted and smiled in rather a sickly manner—I didn't wonder, she was awful! I waved my hand.

"You *are* a saint," said Mr J—— O'B——.

"Is she as bad as she paints?" I asked.

"Worse!" said Mr O'B——, with much feeling.

"Can't understand what your husband sees in her. They say he pays her a great deal of attention."

"That's the worst of being a doctor," said I sweetly. "One has to attend to such curious people. Poor Roger! One could see he was feeling miserable."

"Uncomfortable I should say," said Mr O'B——.

.

That evening Roger wanted to explain things, but I wasn't in the least interested.

"Don't you care?" he asked.

"Of course not; why?"

" Well I thought——"

" That I might be jealous? "

" Well—er—people talk so."

" Not to me about you. They have more interesting things to talk about."

" Then you don't care a damn? "

" Not one little damn, Roger dear."

But I did care. Who wouldn't?

VII

" JEALOUS! " I can hear the elderly spinster sniff.

" Doesn't like being paid back in her own coin."

Well I don't think it could be called jealousy, for I wasn't jealous of Roger or of Mrs de J——. My first feeling was that there was a part of Roger I didn't know; rather interesting! Then again I began to wonder what it was that Mrs de J—— possessed that I did not. That took me to my looking glass. I looked at my outward self rather anxiously. No; it certainly was not her appearance that attracted Roger. What was it?

I cogitated deeply that night in bed, and fell asleep without answering the question. Then I began to study Mrs de J——. I asked questions about her—quite casually. After a lot of difficulty I got to meet her. After a little more I got to know

her—there was nothing very deep about her; and presently I became very friendly with her; asked her to the house; and introduced her to people as “Roger’s friend.”

She was rather unpleasant; noisy in an aggressive sort of way; always on guard against something or other—certainly not her reputation; and she drank.

Of course she was very pleased, poor fool; thought she was en route up the ladder of Social Glory. It was great fun to invite her to very select dinner parties and give her the seat of honour next to Roger; to personally drive her over to Roger’s relations; and to mother her—she was a great deal older than I—at balls.

At first Roger took to it all quite kindly. This was rather a blow, but I persevered. If she had been different somehow I might have out-Heroded Herod, but she wasn’t Herod, merely a silly and moral-less woman. Roger, *animalissimo*, liked her, because she was silly and because she had no morals and because she drank. In his fine moments he hated her. If I had loved Roger I probably would have become moral-less, and drunk to please that portion of him which liked her; and I am quite sure I could have ousted her from even that part of him. But she wasn’t worth it. Besides my scheme was far simpler. I would hang the albatross round his neck. I did.

Poor Roger! She became his albatross—all Dublin enjoyed the joke, enormously. They called him: “The Ancient Mariner.” Wherever

we went, there she was, always hanging round his neck. "Roger's boyhood friend," I called her. "Quite harmless."

Roger began to drink heavily.

When he snubbed her; I comforted her. When he cursed her; I consoled her. If he hit her—and I believe he did, the brute part of him; I patted her. She came to me with all her troubles; she called him Roger to my face. And I—I suppose that every woman has a devil in her somewhere—I enjoyed her tears. She almost lived in the house.

Roger left off drinking.

Then one evening—after dinner—he came to me. "For God's sake get rid of her," he said, almost weeping. "I can't stand this any more."

"Who now?" I asked. He was awful to the servants when in his cups, and the parlourmaid had given notice only the week before.

For a full minute or more he glared at me speechlessly. Then his eyes narrowed; he had a beast of a temper.

"Who the Hell do you think I mean?"

"Roger, please remember that you're not talking to Bertha or the servants." Bertha was her name and suited her exactly. I spoke very quietly.

"You little devil!"

"Poor dear Edward once called me that," I sighed.

"If she comes into this house again, I go. That's final!" he shouted, and started to stamp about the room.

"Roger, *she* will hear you, and *she* will think

that we are fighting, and *she* will want to comfort you, presently."

"I'm the laughing stock of all Ireland."

"They are all *very very* sorry for you."

"Damn their sorrow." Then he suddenly flopped down on his knees and put his head on my lap.

"Don't you love her, Roger?" I asked.

"I hate the damned woman!"

"But you did—once."

"I tell you I hate her! everything decent in me hates her! Oh God, I'm not fit to touch you." He made no effort to move.

"You're not, Roger," said I.

"Will you give me another chance? I'll swear——"

"Go down and kiss her good-bye."

"I'll kill her! I'd like to split her head open with an axe. I can't get rid of her. She clings so infernally, and you encourage her."

"Roger!"

"Well she says you do."

"The cat!"

"What can we do?"

"Drop her," said I.

"Will you?" asked Roger.

"And I'll pick her up if you ever speak to her again."

"You're the sweet——"

"No; I don't feel like letting you kiss me," I said. "Not while that creature is in the house."

"Leave her to me," said Roger.

VIII

AFTER the Albatross incident Roger reformed quite a lot. Naturally he still remained a ladies' man—in his spare time. I don't know what he did to Mrs de J——, but she disappeared, and I never saw her again; I don't think Roger did either.

Roger had two ambitions I discovered: one, to go to Harley Street—he was fearfully keen on brains; the other to have a baby of his own. As both were quite harmless I decided to let him have them. We bought a practice in Harley Street, and there he hung up his plate. I busied myself with the second of his ambitions.

I think wives ought to consult their husbands' wishes about children far more than they do. We women are too apt to think that men take no interest in children. Men love young things. One of the first ambitions of a boy is to possess a puppy; and if he can't get that he keeps dormice or newts or something. When he grows up he branches out into more young things: he breeds puppies, and spends hours and days and weeks in training them; he may acquire a pony. Similarly when he grows up. Now children are far more interesting things than puppies or ponies, and men love to be allowed a share in their upbringing.

The man who is barred from the nursery will, as sure as fate, go back to his puppies or his ponies—polo perhaps by that time.

Poor dear Edward was a devoted father, as I think I mentioned—but as such an able authority as Lord F—— says that repetition is the soul of—something to do with writing, I don't mind repeating myself. At first I didn't think men had any business in the nursery; Edward changed my opinion by pointing to Nature. And it is quite true that animal and bird and insect fathers all share their offspring equally with the mother. This is nice I think, and certainly tends to *camaraderie* between wife and husband.

Men are usually very understanding with babies; they are such big babies themselves. A doctor-man is awful! Have you ever noticed doctors' children? They always look to me as if they were being experimented upon, poor little things!

When little Sheila was born I very nearly died—all on account of Roger. A doctor can't leave well alone. No wonder they are not supposed, ethically, to attend to their own wives; unfortunately (for their wives) most of them do, strictly *sub rosa*.

Now I had had three children myself, and so I might have been expected to know *something* about the business. But there was Roger. If any woman wants to be really ill—and there are some who appear to actually like being ill—I can strongly recommend them to marry a doctor.

Until I married Roger I had never been sick or sorry. With Roger I was always ill.

The trouble is that when a woman is expecting to be a mother she is easily persuaded to do things that she knows, instinctively, are not good for her. Somehow under these conditions a woman becomes languid, and a trifle listless sometimes; she doesn't want to be bothered; so to escape fusses she gives in. Even I, who hate orders and never by any chance obey them—more or less followed out Roger's instructions, with the result, as I say, that I very nearly died. It wasn't Roger's fault that I did not.

From the first everything went wrong. I was horribly ill in the mornings; Roger told me to stay in bed. I reminded him about Edward. He swore and said that I wanted to injure baby—*his* baby. I stayed in bed. After a time I got to getting up at ten, then eleven, then to lunch; always ill. After lunch Roger made me lie down with my feet up. I knew what to expect; poor dear Edward had warned me; but I felt that it wasn't worth fighting about.

I got stout, unpleasantly, indecently stout—the result of too little exercise, naturally. The stouter I became, the less I felt like fighting Roger, and the more ashamed I became of showing my nose out of the house. No woman should look ugly or ungainly when she is *enceinte*; if she does she is living the wrong kind of life. No one could see anything unusual about me before little John, or Evelyn, or Edward made their appearance. Sheila

was painfully obvious after a few months. Then Roger made me drink quantities of milk and beef tea and Benger—all of which I hate; to nourish baby, he said. I refused. He insisted that I was deliberately trying to starve the poor little thing; that I was an unnatural mother. I swallowed Benger and beef tea and milk—pints of milk. It was horrible! I began to detest Roger and hate baby; both of whom I considered directly responsible.

I don't wonder that women dread having children. If Sheila had been my first instead of the fourth, I would far sooner have died than produce another; and I am not a coward. But Sheila and Roger between them frightened me horribly. Latterly Roger began to get scared himself, and a specialist was sent for. Towards the end everything went wrong and he called a priest. Anything more dreadful than the average priests' treatment of women suffering in childbirth is hard to conceive, with their: "In pain shall a woman bring forth children," and all their nonsense about suffering being a part of God's plan to make us better. Better! it made me a positive fiend.

"My child," said that particular priest—I think he must have been a thoroughly bad man, he certainly looked it—"You must have patience. Soon suffering will give way to joy."

I told him about my other children and about Edward.

"It is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our

eyes," he replied enigmatically. " Was your first husband a good Catholic, my child? "

I told him: No; that Edward was really good, not a humbug; and that Edward's God was a God of Love, not a devil of suffering. I told him a great many other things—worse. He seemed fearfully shocked. Presently Roger appeared, and the two of them began to whisper together. Roger performed with the stethoscope—he had insisted for ages that there was something wrong with my heart. I told him to go away. Then the priest came again.

" Am I going to die? " I asked him.

" We are in His hands, my poor child," he intoned. I don't know anything more irritating at any time than having things intoned at one.

" We aren't! and I'm not! " I said.

The excitement was doing me good; I began to feel better, stronger. Something in me must have communicated itself to baby, for she too began to do her duty, neglect of which had caused all the bobbery—so the nurse said afterwards.

Then he wanted to confess me.

I said: " No."

He held up a crucifix, to shrive me, or save me, or whatever it is that they do on these occasions.

I told him to take it away.

Then another doctor—an even greater specialist, so Roger whispered—appeared. I informed him that I had not the slightest intention of dying to please anyone. He did various things; then went away. More whisperings—outside the door this

time. The priest rallied once more to the attack. I called Roger. Then I began. I don't remember exactly what I said, but it was exactly what I felt at the time. At least it was vigorous—so the nurse said. Pain always makes me talk vigorously; and I was in agony. I know poor dear Edward cropped up, and many things that he had told me about Roman Catholicism and doctors, all of which must have been most appropriate. I remember too shaking my fist at Roger and shouting in a whisper that he and he alone had killed me—if I died; which I had no intention of doing.

After a while I got tired of talking; I needed all my energy in fighting, fighting that agony that seemed to be tearing me to tiny pieces, fighting to shut back the cries and stifle the tears.

Still the idiot stood at my bedside.

I think I swore. In a mist the priest vanished. Silly words—I don't know where they came from: "The Captains and the Kings depart, the Captains and the Kings depart" reiterated themselves in my brain. I laughed immoderately. The next thing I remember was chloroform.

When eventually I came to Roger solemnly informed me that he had saved my life.

IX

EVERYONE said that she was a "bee-utiful" baby; and Roger was in raptures. It weighed twelve pounds two ounces he informed me proudly. He brought it over to me, and one look at it was enough. I told him to take it away. It was awful! Hideously ugly, enormously fat, with a bloated, scarlet, wrinkly face like a dyspeptic old roué. Its nose was flat and wide and it had an enormous dent in the middle—forceps, the nurse explained. A bee-utiful baby!

Roger was horrified—not at his baby—but at me. Anyhow I couldn't help it, I hated that baby (how awful it looks in print, but I can't help it, I did hate it). I suggested that it must be a changeling; that none of *my* children were like that. Little John only weighed six pounds and was a lovely little fellow, perfectly proportioned; Evelyn weighed six and a half and was lovely too; Edward just over seven; all were dear little, dainty atoms, miniature men and women, complete, perfect, and beautiful. Anyone would have loved them. But Sheila!!! She was Sheila after Roger's aunt, the one who had left him all her money. I found out later that she stipulated in her will that Roger's

eldest daughter (how many she imagined I was going to provide for Roger I don't pretend to know) was to be christened after her. It was very lucky that I did *not* know until after the christening.

There's another thing that I won't have for my children: a quantity of names. I've got six myself—not counting surnames; most confusing! I don't think children should be burdened with a crowd of ugly names just because people are going to leave them money. If any relations of mine, and I have hoards—counting in-laws, ever name their children after me, I'll cut them off with a shilling. So relatives, some of you are certain to read this—if I've got to send it to you myself, take warning!

Of course I couldn't feed Sheila; Roger said I couldn't, and being a doctor he naturally knew. To tell the truth I was very glad.

I am not a natural mother, and I admit the fact quite freely. I love beautiful things, because they are beautiful. Keats is my favourite poet; he understood what Beauty meant. I loved Edward's children because they were beautiful. I hated Roger's child because it was diabolically ugly. I could have fed Roger's child just as I nourished the others; every woman can.

Never mind what doctors say, every woman can feed her child, unless she is deformed or is recovering from fever or small-pox or something. Don't for goodness sake be persuaded, or in a fit of pique put your baby on a bottle, as I did. It doesn't pay—even if you have a dozen good nurses.

Your own health is certain to suffer, if your baby's doesn't—which it most assuredly will.

I was ill for months: hysterical, nervous, and stupid, all because Roger said that I couldn't supply Sheila and because Sheila was so hideous. It was wrong of me, I realise; but I paid "full measure and brimming over" (poor dear Edward was very fond of that quotation). Every woman can feed her baby (I have said this three times already, to drive it into the stupidest head). If the quantity of milk is insufficient use Lactogol, the same sort of stuff as cotton seed cake that farmers give to their cows. If the quality is poor, use Lactogol. No; I am not interested financially in the firm. I often wonder why they don't advertise it more, so many young mothers to whom I have mentioned it had never even heard of it, nor had their doctors. Perhaps because it can stand on its merits.

As the mother of five children and wife of three men I say unto you, sisters (I feel sure that I shall be in Politics one day), put not your faith in doctors (my second husband was a doctor and most brilliant as doctors go), throw all bottles out of the window, and feed your children. And the name of this book will be blessed, people may even buy it.

To return to my story: the first or second time I managed to crawl out of bed Roger wanted me to go to church and return thanks.

"What for?" I asked him.

"Well—for getting better."

"I thought it was *you* that did that?"

"Well—er—under God's guidance."

" Roger, you are an ass and a hypocrite. Voilà tout! And, I suppose I might just as well break it to you now, I have done with your Church! I am an Atheist."

X

ROGER had an awful time with Sheila. Nothing seemed to suit her; every two or three weeks her food would be changed, and she got thinner and thinner—rather an improvement I thought. Of course I was far too ill to take much interest in her; and after all it was Roger's fault, and she was *his* baby.

I was never very interested in Sheila; somehow she didn't seem like my child; and she was always so ugly. She's married now—thank goodness! I must say Fate was very kind to Sheila; if it hadn't been for Roger's money heaven only knows who I could have found to marry her. As it was she caused me a great deal of anxiety; always turning up her nose—figuratively speaking for really it was a beak, and the original dent never would disappear—at my selections; and always falling in love with impossible people—just like her father. Eventually she fell in love—so she said—with a Jewish K.C., quite a prominent figure on the bench—there must be money in the Law mustn't there?

Fortunately his surname was quite Christian, so I could write and tell all my friends that he was "an English gentleman of the New School;" but I couldn't send a photograph. They seem very happy, I am glad to say. He's very generous, so she says. And she was always on the big side. So we can say good-bye to Sheila, rather thankfully for my part; she always was rather a smudge on my life.

A short chapter.

XI

It is rather boring being a doctor's wife, even though one's husband is quite celebrated—I wonder how many readers of these pages have been to him for advice? When the consulting-room is in one's house, and the waiting-room, the whole atmosphere becomes charged with sickness. Telepathy I suppose.

Everyone was always ill. I don't know what it is about a doctor that makes one feel ill—instinctively. And yet there are heaps and heaps of women who seem to like doctors. "How nice it must be to feel that you have a doctor always in the house," my friends used to say. And *that* is just the

trouble. I suppose one feels that one shouldn't waste one's opportunities. I was always ill with Roger. If he hadn't died himself I am quite sure that I should have done so. As it is I still feel the effects. If Roger had been a celebrated specialist in Harley Street when poor dear Edward was killed I should certainly not have married him. If he was to appear again *now* still celebrated and still a doctor, and there was no other man on earth, I wouldn't marry him. Perhaps if he came back as the rather foolish, rather wild boy who had searched all England for me and found me in Rome, perhaps I might. One never can tell, can one?

Roger of Harley Street and Roger of Rome, or Monte Carlo, or Dublin were two separate and distinct people. I suppose being a woman I am never satisfied, but oh! how I longed for a glimpse of the Roger who wasn't there. It would have been quite a relief to have seen him excited, or drunk; even Mrs de J—— would have been a change. But Roger had turned over a new leaf; and I was far too ill to turn it back. I couldn't even pluck up heart to flirt. To flirt properly one must be feeling fit. I couldn't even take any interest in Roger's flirtations; they seemed so mild and milk-and-watery, such uninteresting, consulting-room affairs.

I think, in fact I know, that Roger did an enormous amount of good during this time. He was a great brain man, and his theories always made me feel horribly giddy. I know one finds doing good most fascinating; I do. But it is

horribly boring to a third person. Roger, naturally thought that I was interested in his work.

The house became a hot bed of lunatics in various stages of madness. If any really interesting case appeared, as sure as fate Roger would bring her—or sometimes him—to be introduced to me. Then periodically I had to notice the wonderful improvement that Roger had made in them. The women were the worst. Most of them seemed to be suffering from anæmia, hysteria, or mania of some kind; most of them were rich; the majority unmarried; and all without exception had nothing to do. These Roger called his *best* patients. One and all adored Roger. So long as I would let them, they would rave about him. Rather rotten!

Roger did them good, I suppose; anyhow they always came, for more treatment, or advice, or medicine, or whatever it was that Roger gave them in return for their guineas. Of course there was nothing the matter with them really; anyone could see that. Poor things, what they did want was so simple that they wouldn't have believed it, certainly not *paid* for it, perhaps Roger was wise in not recommending it: Work or Matrimony.

All women require one or other of these two; and they must make up their mind which they want most. I think the better plan nowadays would be for every woman, certainly every plain woman, to learn to do something. Then if her man, or some suitable man comes along, she can retire from her trade, to resume it after the birds have flown. You see I know these things, although I don't put

them into practice myself. But then no really clever people ever practise what they preach, do they?

Roger did not introduce many of his men patients to me; and those he did were rather far gone. But at least they were interesting—some of them screamingly funny. And they weren't always talking about Roger.

There was one man, an artist—I daren't mention his name—who fancied that he could paint. Unfortunately the poor fellow suffered from delusions. He was most amusing on every subject under the sun except Art. On Art he was awful; mad as a March hare, Roger said. His favourite delusion was that something or someone somewhere was urging him to give a message to the world; he knew that one day he would give the message: it was a great message, something that would move people as they had never been moved before. Unfortunately he wasn't quite sure what that message was. He was always getting brain storms, and they made him very ill, poor man. Under their influence he would paint furiously—thinking that it was *the message* at last. Many of his pictures—frightfully Futurist—caused quite a sensation and sold for large sums. But they affected him so that he had to come to Roger for relief.

Another was a literary man with long hair (quite the old school though he was only a boy) and semi-Victorian whiskers (you know the things, cinema actors sometimes wear them, come down two or

three inches below the ears). He suffered horribly, poor wretch. He had a manuscript; he had had it ever since he was twenty-one and had taken it to every publisher in London. It was a masterpiece; he ought to know being a critic. It was the story of a man—himself I suppose—who had set out to look for Truth, and had found It. It was all there, eighty thousand words of It. It only wanted publishing and advertising to reform the world. Would I read It? I did. It was wonderfully simple. Meanwhile the poor fellow (he had heaps of money—he made two or three thousand a year, so he told me) wrote articles and reviews and things for papers and magazines. “They love it you know,” he would complain, with tears in his eyes. “But, my God! it’s driving me mad.” It was. Roger said his case was quite hopeless. I suggested that he should become a publisher, and bring out his own book. He did, eventually; and went bankrupt. It’s a cruel world to some people, isn’t it?

Then there was a religious lunatic—I don’t know why Roger brought him to me?—who fancied that *woman* was the cause of all the trouble in the world. His wife was a suffragette, one of the very first, always smashing windows and pouring paraffin into pillar-boxes (rather a fetching alliteration!) Poor man, he was very mad, and the way he glowered at me the first time was very terrifying. But I was on my mettle in defence of Woman. Roger always used to say that he was one of his best cures.

Another remarkable case, who used to come sometimes, was a celebrated Judge. He always appeared at night in a closed cab. I never saw him; he said that women chattered so. Roger told me all about him—in strict confidence. Quite mad, poor man! But he still continued to deal out Justice.

Then there was—you all know *him*. He's old, very ugly, skinny, rather wild looking, and a vegetarian. He writes plays and books with himself in all the parts. Quite harmless, poor creature! His was an awful predicament: he was a Socialist and had heaps of money. "It paid him to be a Socialist," he said. What to do with his money, was one of his troubles; for he couldn't persuade himself that it was right to give it away. I suggested a wife, but he was too clever for that. His other trouble was that he fancied himself a Builder—not a man who builds houses, nothing so common as that, but a World Builder. That was in his mad moments, which were comparatively few. In his sober senses (he was a teetotaller) he destroyed things. He was always destroying things, with his pen of course, all sorts of things: governments, kings, religions, reputations. Then he would go mad in trying to build them up again; and come to Roger. Roger gave him Phosphates; Hypnotic suggestion had no effect. I don't know who is giving him Phosphates now.

XII

I USED to love doctors—men doctors—until I married Roger. Now I don't. I know too much about them, and they are so frightfully human. When one is ill, one likes to think of a doctor as a sort of healing machine; some—the best—are like that, especially surgeons. Unfortunately nowadays, like everyone and everything else, doctors have become smitten by the commercial spirit. Doctoring used to be a profession; now it is a trade, controlled by Union rules and regulations like any other trade. For many years past most doctors have been out for money. I got an inkling of all this with Roger. Roger wasn't really mercenary—he had no need to be, besides he was Irish—all the same he knew how to charge the well-to-do. At the same time he could afford to be generous to the poor. Some doctors are like that; rather nice I think.

Specialists, as everyone knows, have fixed fees: so much a consultation. The general practitioner has nothing fixed, except his income tax and panel patients. To be a Successful Practitioner he has to be an Expert Valuer. Have you ever noticed the surreptitious glances of the doctor at the furniture, carpets, pictures, and so on of the house

he is visiting for the first time? If you have, you probably imagined that he was merely taking a friendly interest in your surroundings. Don't you believe it! He is weighing you in the balance. You may even point out to him some rare piece of ancestral plate or the picture of your great grandmother by Reynolds. For goodness sake don't! If you see him looking at it tell him that it's electro or an imitation. If you must show him anywhere but into the sick-room, take him to the kitchen. And always remember to shut all the doors that he is likely to pass; and keep them shut. Tell him—most of them like to be talked to—how poor you are; discuss the price of bread with him, and margarine; confide in him about poor Jimmy or Joseph or Jack, who you can't afford to send to school. Then, if you have been clever, he will treat you considerately.

By Law the doctor is entitled to charge according to the rateable value of the house you live in. Naturally he finds it a lot of bother writing to the Inland Revenue, or whoever rates one's house; besides these Government Departments are so slow aren't they? So the doctor can't be blamed for using his own judgment.

Another thing: never pay a doctor's bill immediately. If you do he will think that he *underestimated* your value, and next time up will go your bill. Keep him waiting; better still write him a sweet little note and tell him that you are so sorry etc.—any good plausible story with the human note running through it will do.

Doctors have their fingers in most pies these days. If your doctor suggests any patent medicine for you, or patent food for the children, remember that in all probability he owns shares in that particular concern. If he recommends you to deal with Mr Jones the chemist in such and such a street, you will be shocked to learn that in all probability he is Mr Jones.

I once knew a doctor—a babies' doctor—who made an enormous income out of a patent milk. Every mother who fell into his clutches was made to put her baby on the bottle, and the bottle was to contain his food. He happened to be the inventor of the food. He wanted Roger to recommend it to his lunatics; that's how I know.

Every trade has its tricks, and to know the tricks one must be in the trade; that's why we set a thief to catch a thief. Now if there is one thing on earth that a doctor dislikes more than panel patients it is attending a confinement case. Most doctors make a point of coming in after it is all over; and their method of excusing themselves is to compliment the mother on her wonderful fortitude which deceived them into thinking that the baby would not be born until to-morrow morning. The nurse will always corroborate this statement. Then they will expatiate at full length on the beauties of the baby. And everyone will be satisfied. Similarly if anything should happen to go wrong; there is the nurse and a host of technicalities. The only real protection one has

against technicalities and long Latin words is to know something about one's anatomy. After all it's one's own person that gets ill, and one ought to know a little about it. Roger's stories of confinement cases used to make my hair stand on end; and I vowed inwardly that if ever I was a mother again no man would have a hand in it.

Roger used to tell one lovely story about a certain famous specialist—tummy, or chest, or something—who was one of the seven wonders of Harley Street. His *special* speciality was to diagnose his clients' complaints without asking them their symptoms. "My dear madam"—most of his patients were women, silly creatures!—"Not a word, please"—this when she began to pour out her troubles—"I am the doctor! hah! hah! And it is my part to tell you what your trouble is." Awe-struck silence, of course. Then he would look very learned, ruffle his forehead, screw up his eyes, and gaze at her fixedly for a few moments through enormous horn spectacles. No "put your tongue out, please," or "kindly cough. That's right! Again. Thank you"; no "Would you be good enough to take a deep breath. The very thing. Now ninety-nine. Again! Once more please. That will do, madam." Merely a fixed stare. And then he would tell them all their troubles.

His fame spread; women raved about his marvellous powers, his wonderful gift of divination; his bank account grew and grew and grew;

he bought a motor-car—one of the first on the market. Rather wonderful wasn't it?

And how do you suppose he did it?

(This space is for meditation.)

"Psychology," Roger called it. Now Psychology is the lost art of understanding people. According to Roger it is Psychology that tells men that women love to talk; that when women are ill they must talk about their illness; that a collection of women in a doctor's waiting-room are bound, by the laws of gravitation, to discuss their respective complaints—provided they (the complaints) are nothing very serious, and provided also that they (the women) are kept waiting sufficiently long.

Doctor Blank had a very uncomfortable waiting-room, and never by any chance provided papers. He always kept his patients waiting a long, long time. His consulting-room did not lead from the waiting-room, but was next door to it. And— isn't it too sickening?—he had a peep-hole and a sort of telephone trumpet between the two rooms. Through the peephole he *saw*, and through the trumpet he *heard everything* that went on in the waiting-room.

And do you know that Roger, my husband, used to think it was a great joke?

XIII

It was Roger that drove me to Christian Science. If one is always feeling ill, living in an atmosphere of illness, one, naturally enough, is grateful to anyone or anything that affords the smallest crumb of relief. Being thoroughly disgusted with doctors I suppose I was a comparatively easy prey to Major W——, a retired Anglo-Indian and a confirmed Christian Scientist, confirmed that is by opinion, not by a Bishop.

I met Major W—— during one of my periodical pilgrimages into gaiety. He was not one of Roger's patients. I don't know anything more trying than to try and be lively and amusing when one feels like dying. How in the world our wonderful men managed it during the war is beyond me. I don't think we stay-at-homes ever appreciated them enough; if we did we certainly seem to have forgotten all about them now.

Now it is a great mistake to think that all Christian Scientists are hard, callous creatures, pious frauds, bursting with health, and impatient of other people's sufferings. Major W—— was one of the most charming and sympathetic men I have ever met, simply brimming over with the milk

of human kindness—the only kind of milk I like. He was a healer, or rather what Christian Scientists call a “Practitioner”; I didn’t know that at the time, if I had I should most certainly have shunned him like the plague. In spite of all my efforts, he saw that I was not feeling well. Now, to be told that you are looking seedy when you know you are, and when you have spent long hours in trying not to look seedy, is usually most annoying. There is all the difference in the world between *feeling* and *looking* isn’t there?

Major W—— was a perfect dear. This is how he broached the subject:

“My dear Mrs O——, please excuse a purely personal observation, but I have been admiring you for some little time, and I have come to the conclusion that your looks belie your present feelings. Am I not right?”

He looked so old and wise and sweet as he said this that of course I told him all about everything. When I got to Roger and his lunatics, he nodded his head several times. When I had finished—and he never even interrupted me once—he asked me a curious question:

“I wonder—you will think me extraordinary no doubt—but do you believe in anything, my dear Mrs O——? I mean—er—do you believe in the existence of a Supreme Deity?”

“Do you mean God?” I asked in a low voice. It was rather an unusual topic and I saw out of the tail of one eye a horrid creature in the Hussars, a Captain Something or other—who was obviously

listening, smile and cock an eyeglass in my direction.

Major W—— nodded. I feel sure that he must have noticed my uneasiness, for a moment later he suggested our moving to the other end of the room where there was an alcove with two empty chairs, and added: "My grey hairs must be my guarantee." He was a very gallant old gentleman.

"Do you believe in God, my dear Mrs O——?" he asked when we had seated ourselves.

I explained all about my views on religion, how I had been all sorts of things, and that at the present time I was an Atheist.

He asked me what I meant by Atheist.

That was rather a stumper. I explained that I meant that I never went to church, or said any prayers—kneeling down, or called myself anything—except just Atheist.

He nodded and smiled. He had a sweet smile that reminded me of little John. There is a wonderful resemblance between old things and young things don't you think?

"And who do you think made the world and the sun and the stars, the sea and the sky?" he asked. "Who made all the flowers and the trees and the birds and the beasts? Who made everything that's beautiful? Who made you?"

"God," I answered promptly.

"Then you believe in One God?"

"Yes," emphatically.

"Then you and I, my dear Mrs O——, have one.

and the same opinion on that score. We shall be friends, for God is a great basis for friendship."

"And grey hairs," I suggested artlessly.

His eyes twinkled. He was a perfect dear.

"And grey hairs," he repeated gravely.

It's far too involved to tell you now what Major W—— told me about Christian Science, and you can find out all about it in Mrs Eddy's book, dull as ditch water I thought. So few women write well, do they? But Major W—— wasn't a bit dull, and he did me an awful lot of good. In fact he cured me. Of course he said that it wasn't him; that the cure came from the Great Source of all Healing to me through him; that there was only One Healer. Perhaps he was right, at any rate I am most grateful to him (Major W——). He was never stuffy, nor stodgy, nor preachy. If he had been I shouldn't have listened to him for a minute. His method of curing people was by ordinary—not auto—suggestion, putting new ideas into their heads, and persuading them to think things out for themselves, all in the course of conversation. He used to draw one out, not reduce one to silence. And I must say that ten minutes with Major W—— did me more good than fifty bottles of Roger's medicine.

Naturally I became very keen on Christian Science. I called myself a Scientist, and practised on all sorts of people. It was great fun; and really one could do quite a lot of curing. In fact it is a curious thing, but one can cure other people far

easier than oneself. When one is suffering horribly—or rather thinking horribly that one is suffering—one requires to be a Philosopher as well as a Scientist to think that one isn't. When other people are suffering it is quite easy to tell them that there is no such thing as pain. After a time, I found it better not to *tell* them, merely to *think*—hard—that there was nothing the matter with them. Most sick people are so impatient aren't they?

Major W—— didn't like my curing people—professional jealousy I suppose! He always used to say that the Science of Christian Healing had to be learnt just like any other Science.

"Surely one should practise?" I used to say.

"By all means, my dear lady. But for goodness sake practise on yourself. Just think what would become of the medical profession if day old students were to be turned loose to practise on the public."

"One can't hurt one's patients, can one?" It was a horrible thought, and out it had to come, Science or no Science.

"*You* can't hurt them, any more than *you* can help them."

"But I can! Heaps of people have told me what a lot of good I've done them."

"Men, I suppose?" This rather wistfully, I thought.

I nodded.

"And women mostly come to me," and he sighed. "It's a great pity our students can't

practise quietly," he continued. "They do our Church so much harm."

"But they don't ask money for curing people like properly appointed practitioners do. I don't think they ought to charge." It was rather mean of me to say this, for I knew that Major W—— was a qualified practitioner himself and that he did charge a little something, people said to help eke out his pension; but he had never charged *me*.

"It is a moot question; Mrs Eddy claimed that a workman was worthy of his hire. Personally I would far rather not make any charge, however small. But it really does protect one from hordes of inquisitive and idle people—mostly women with nothing to do. For anyone to pay even a few shillings these days guarantees that they are at least interested and not merely curious."

Rather a good argument, I thought.

Major W—— had a convincing way with him, and I gave up practising aloud. Of course I had to talk about Christian Science and help to spread the good work. As for practising on myself! I gave it up as a bad job, and whenever I felt seedy paid Major W—— a visit—it was far easier. However I did try my hand on Roger—openly. You can imagine how furious he was. It *was* fun. And do you know I really believe that I did help to cure some of his patients.

I might have been a great healer now if it hadn't been for quite a simple little thing that made me leave the Christian Science Church. It is the little

things that do make such a difference in life, don't they?

How many might-have-been-happy marriages have been ruined by tiny trifles! Artistic Temperament falls in love with Beauty, because she is Beauty externally, and of course must be beautiful inside. Beauty is carried off her feet by the very impetuosity of Artistic Temperament; he makes love so nicely and is so radiantly clever! They are married. Artistic Temperament discovers that Beauty eats with a knife or snores. Most upsetting and ugly! or that Beauty has no brain. Horrible! He becomes mournful. Beauty has only seen him gloriously happy; she doesn't like him in the dumps. *Viola, mesdames!*

It happened after the service during what is called—if I remember right—"the Giving of Testimony." I was with Major W—— at the time; he had often begged me to go to church with him (there are four or five hundred Christian Science churches now I understand), but I always thought it waste of time to sit for hours in a stuffy church, and one always catches colds and things in churches. However he was very anxious; and I went.

Christian Science services are equally as boring as other services. There was far too much "Mary Baker Eddy," and "Our Revered Founder" to please me. It doesn't seem to me to make tuppence worth of difference who says or does things so long as they (the things I mean) are beautiful. People are always so *personal*, aren't they? So long as

the author or artist isn't present what on earth *can* it matter who or what they are, or whether they are good looking or ugly? So few of us have the strength of mind to stand on our own judgment. "Doctor So-and-So!" we say. "Marvellous!" or "by Rufus Cashstein, *the great sculptor*. Isn't it wonderful!" I don't do that. I'm not a sheep; and I refuse to be herded out of my opinions. My opinion is as much mine as my face or figure; and every bit as good—if not better—than other people's. Most Christian Scientists are sheep, and Mrs Eddy is their shepherd. I have no use for shepherds—certainly not shepherdesses. The testimony performance is most trying. First a woman bobs up, then some man, and give their experience; rather like the Salvation Army, but far less exciting. One tells how she was cured of cancer by reading Mrs Eddy's book. Another how her grandmother's life was saved by one sentence from Mrs Eddy's book. I must say that the men seem rather more intelligent in their testimony. One man, a doctor, was really quite impressive. He told, in a lovely earnest voice, how his mother was dying of an Incurable Disease; how both his father (also a doctor) and himself had done everything for her that Medical Science could do; how four or five—I forget how many—specialists had all given her up; how his sister had suggested Christian Science; how they had laughed; how eventually, to please his sister, he had gone round to a certain Practitioner; how ashamed he had felt—he actually turned up his coat collar, so he said;

how the Practitioner had come; and "my mother is alive to-day, and this happened five years ago." Then he went on to tell us what happened afterwards: "First our medicines went out of the window; then, after a time—and they were very hard to part with, our medical books. And now both my father and myself, once Medical Practitioners, are Practitioners in Christian Science, *and our practice has increased enormously*. And that is what Christian Science has done for us."

All testimonies end with "and that is what Christian Science has done for me"; and down bobs the speaker; and up pops another.

I must say that the doctor's speech quite impressed me, and I had made up my mind to die in my new faith, and had whispered as much to Major W——, when the woman sitting next to me—an awful looking creature! began to speak.

She commenced by telling us how she had been travelling in a train (second class I'm quite sure), and had fallen asleep. When she woke up she missed her hand-bag, and of course it contained *all* her money (just like her!) The carriage was crowded. No one had seen it. She felt like crying. Then she remembered Mrs Eddy. Her hand-bag was not lost; it was not lost; not lost; not lost; not lost; not lost! For five minutes she prayed in this strain. Then she opened her eyes. And there was the hand-bag—she had been sitting on it.

This was bad enough; there was worse to come.

"Another thing happened to me," she cleared

her throat—an unladylike habit to say the least. “Two years ago I suffered from ingrowing toenail—”

I got up and left.

XIV

WHEN next I met Major W——, he was most apologetic, and did his level best to mollify my feelings. He was very sweet about it, and explained very nicely that it took all sorts and conditions of people to fill a church.

“Why have churches at all?” I said. “Nasty stuffy places!”

“Well—er—she would probably have given the same testimony out of doors.”

“It might have sounded less unpleasant in the fresh air,” I said.

“But, my dear Mrs O——, surely *your* faith is strong enough to withstand so small a thing as——”

“Not—ugh! the nasty creature.”

And there we left it. I still remained friends with Major W——, but as for going into a Christian Science Church, or calling myself a Christian Scientist, it is putting too much strain on one's faith.

Perhaps it was because I stopped practising on him, that Roger got worse. He had been getting wild and excitable for some time, but now he got steadily wilder and more excitable. His spells of irritability and moodiness became more frequent and lasted longer. The servants began to get terrified of him. Even Sheila he seemed to dislike at times. And several of his men patients suggested to me that I ought to consult a doctor about him.

But I had had enough of doctors.

One day I persuaded Major W—— to come and see us. I had never asked him before, because, well—Roger had become so rude to my men friends and I didn't want to put him in a false position. Besides he was quite a little man and Roger was enormously tall.

He came; it was very brave of him. And it was awful. I hadn't told Roger that a friend of mine was coming, but I asked him as a favour to come and have tea with me. His tea at this time consisted of a brandy and soda; he had begun to drink heavily again—sometimes two bottles a day, so Mary, the parlour-maid said.

I remember that I was telling Major W—— about Spiritualism, in which I was just getting interested—it had followed quite naturally on Christian Science and some awfully interesting friends of mine were interested in it, when in stalked Roger, looking as black as thunder.

He wouldn't touch any tea, and sat smiling horribly and licking his lips like a tiger. I could see that he was in one of his worst moods.

Major W—— did his best; but from the first I saw that it was quite hopeless.

“ So it’s you who persuaded my wife into this damned nonsense,” said Roger in the silky voice he put on when he licked his lips.

“ Don’t you think she is wonderfully improved in — er — er — health? ” asked Major W—— pleasantly. Somehow one couldn’t imagine him a real soldier—that is a soldier who killed things.

Roger gripped the arms of the chair—a wicker one—until they creaked. He looked positively fiendish.

“ I think you will agree with me that she is—er—far happier,” continued Major W——.

I was afraid to look at Roger.

“ That is—er—than she was before she—er—before I——”

I rang the bell.

Mary came in just in the nick of time; and while I held Roger she showed Major W—— downstairs. He wasn’t much hurt, poor little man.

I asked him afterwards to give Roger absent treatment. But he said that he was afraid that Roger was a bad subject. Some are, you know.

XV

I WAS terribly worried, for Roger got worse and worse. It was like a nightmare to live in the same house with him. Mary said that he was injecting stuff into his arm—how she knew I don't know. A good many of my friends advised me to have him put away, and all of them urged me to leave him. Mother and father, who had come up to stay a week, left within twenty-four hours. I must say that Roger excelled himself on that occasion. He insisted on appearing at every meal, refused to shake hands, and never opened his mouth; only *looked*. Mother wanted me to come at once to their hotel. And it was as much as I could do to prevent father from sending them and there for the police.

Poor Roger! He was quite mad. It's a horrible thing to have to confess, but there it is. So far there are no signs of Sheila going mad, so I suppose it was because of his lunatics. I am quite sure that one can't live in an atmosphere of lunacy without becoming affected oneself; even I was beginning to feel quite strange. If it hadn't been for Major W—— I am certain that I should

have gone mad; he was an old dear! also he quite made up his mind that I was a saint in staying with Roger.

I still think that it was rather sporting of me to stick to Roger. But somehow I felt that I couldn't leave him all alone. Besides he hadn't always been mad; and I hoped that perhaps he might get better some day.

I shall never forget how awful he was when I had little John, and Evelyn, and Edward to stay with me for a week during their holidays. John was twelve then, Edward eight, and Evelyn half-way between the two. Poor dear Edward's mother appeared to be very kind to them, and they seemed very fond of her, which was rather unnatural of them I thought; children are such curious little things, aren't they? Of course it was best for them that she should be kind, although I didn't think that they ought to have been *quite* so devoted to her. Twice a year they used to come up to me for a week, and once or twice I went to see them, but Edward's brother's wife was rather unpleasant, so I had long ago given up my visits.

Little John especially used to enjoy coming to see me; he still remembered what his father had told him, and it was delicious the way he would take care of me. He always called me "little mother." Wherever he was, whether at school (I must say Edward's brother sent them all to excellent schools, both the boys went to C—— College) or with Edward's mother (they called her

"Grannie," but I never could) he always wrote to me once a week. I have all his letters now. What funny little letters those first ones were! and how carefully he must have chosen the notepaper! Sometimes there was an animal on the left hand top corner—he loved animals; sometimes the picture of a soldier—Highlanders were his favourites. His first letter was written when he was four, copper-plate and rather smudgy; it went: "My dear mamma, how are you thank you very much for the lovely toys you sent me and grand-mamma too good-bye from loving little John." Underneath someone had written "Master John did this all by himself." Somehow I always knew that he would be a soldier—rather sad I thought, for he was very like poor dear Edward and would be certain to be sent wherever there was danger. Some soldiers are; while others—the ones who become famous—usually stay at home to administer things. I remember the letter that convinced me that he would be a soldier—I was rather proud of it once. It was written from his first boarding school; there was a Piper—Highland regiment—occupying most of the first page.

"My dear Mother" (boarding schools always make boys rather reserved)

"I know such a lot of the boys now. I went to J—— W——'s home last Saturday and I liked it very much. I played football there. When are you coming to see me. I have drilling and the Sergeant says I am the best boy. I can play

cricket. When is Baby going to send me some flowers. I send my love to you. Now good-bye.

“ From your loving John ” (even the
“ little ” had gone).

There they are my piles of love letters, all tied up in pink ribbon : baby scribbles, pictures of sailing boats and battleships, valentines ; and what a lot of kisses—little John loved kissing—in this bundle. In that : more sedate epistles, pictures rather better drawn, still quantities of kisses. And this, all with that hateful “ passed by the field censor ” stamp, the last. I don’t know why I keep them : it only makes me cry to read them now.

Roger was in one of his worst tantrums when the children came. For a day or two he kept to himself, then he swore at Evelyn on the stairs. Little John heard him ; so did I, and I came out just in time to see the fun.

“ How dare you speak to my sister like that ? ” I could only see the back of him, but the attitude and the red ears were poor dear Edward to the life.

“ How dare I ? You little beast ! ” And Roger, very white and scowling horribly, darted up the staircase.

I quite expected little John to run—Roger looked positively dangerous ; not a bit of it. He stood his ground, with Evelyn behind him, and as Roger came within reach, he kicked him hard on the shin. Roger swore again as he rubbed his leg, then grabbed him by the collar.

I screamed; and William—who acted as porter and valet to Roger—came running up. From the back premises appeared Mary and cook.

Before them all Roger spanked little John until he was tired. Then he dropped him. Roger's hand was scarlet. Little John's face was deathly white.

"I'll teach you to be impertinent to me, you little brute!"

"You're a—a—big bully!" And little John's face worked as he fought back the tears. He still stood firm, and his eyes blazed.

Roger made a motion to seize him again. That was too much even for William, who took hold of Roger's arm from behind, while cook grabbed the other, and I caught up little John—he was tiny even at twelve—and carted him off upstairs.

Of course they couldn't stay in the house after that, and I wasn't going to send them back to Edward's mother before the week was up, so I and Mary took them to B—— Hotel. We had a lovely time. Little John voted that it was the best holiday that he had ever had.

XVI

It was horrid when the week came to an end and they had to go back to Edward's mother, and I to Roger.

It was then that I had the greatest temptation to leave Roger. I was never meant for a doctor's wife, certainly not a mad doctor's, and I had come to loathe the gloomy old house in Harley Street and everything connected with it. I went to see Major W——. He did his best to persuade me not to go back.

"My dear Mrs O——," he said. "It's like putting your head into a lion's jaws. I don't think even I could stand it."

"What would *you* suggest?" I asked.

"Well—er—er——. My dear Mrs——, my own d——"

I knew what was coming and I didn't feel like being made love to—even by him. Besides I have always hated the idea of judicial separations and divorces and things; they are such a proof of failure, abject, miserable failure to hold the man one has married. I don't like being beaten—even by circumstances. If Major W—— had tried to persuade me to go back, I might, who knows what I might have done?

Like a dutiful wife I returned to Roger.

That very evening he tried to commit suicide by throwing himself out of my bedroom window. I was just in the nick of time to catch him by the legs and hang onto them for dear life, until Mary came. Between us we got him in and shut the window. A policeman who was passing saw everything; and I am quite sure that he thought that we were trying to murder Roger. Anyhow he rang at the bell, and wouldn't be put off by

William. So I had to make up a story that a pet parrot had escaped and that Roger—with our assistance—had tried to get it from the coping. I don't know whether he believed me or not; at all events he went away.

For days after I could see the same policeman eyeing our windows. I pointed this out to Roger, who seemed rather impressed and kept away from the windows for quite a long time.

When he wasn't trying to murder me—I slept with the revolver that poor dear Edward had given me under the mattress—Roger was always threatening suicide. He frightened me horribly. To-day I am beginning to doubt whether he would ever have had the moral courage. I know most people say that persons who threaten to do things to themselves seldom do them, and they may be right—I think they are—now. But at the time one doesn't think like that. Look how unpleasant and awkward it would have been for me if Roger had destroyed himself. As it was there were and are to this very day people who say that I sent Roger off his head. Edward's brother I know says so; so do several of my own relations. The only ones who think that I was a most dutiful and uncommonly good wife to Roger—which I was—are his own relations.

I must say I think relations are the cause of nine out of ten unhappy marriages. Relations must make mischief; trouble seems to be the very breath of life to them. If it hadn't been for poor dear Edward's people I should never have married

Roger, and it is quite on the cards that I would have remained a widow all my life—black always did suit me. Then again one's parents always seem to think that they have some sort of hold over one, a sort of ninety-nine years' lease.

My advice to young married couples is to make up their minds from the moment they are married to keep away at all costs from their relations, and to live their own lives in their own way. A young couple, however much they love each other, must quarrel a little before they come to understand each other's point of view. Sooner or later they are bound to settle down if they are *alone*. With her mother or his hanging around and giving wretched advice at wrong moments, they are nearly certain to go from bad to worse. *Her* mother will make friends with *him*, his with her; that is step number one when the in-laws are really astute. He will say when she has suggested that mamma (hers) should go away (for a little): "My dear child, I can't make out why you want to get rid of your own mother, most unnatural of you! Besides, she's so useful, and *she* does understand house-keeping. Now if it had been *my* mother."

"*Your* mother doesn't interfere. She's so sweet, and so understanding and helpful. And *she* does realise that one isn't born a housekeeper."

He grunts and scowls at this point. For the truth of the matter is that His mother always takes Her part; and usually tells Him that She is far too good for Him.

There is only one way to deal with mothers-in-

law in a really satisfactory manner, and that is to get rid of them. If for any reason you can't do that (which I don't admit) then She must manage Her own mother, and He His, without the slightest interference from the other. I have seen that plan work quite well.

Heaven help the poor young couple who think that "mamma will be so useful to look after baby," and put the thought into action. They might just as well make a present of the baby to mamma and have done with it. Besides, what can a grandmother know about modern children?

There is no doubt that we were all meant to marry and have children and look after our children ourselves. I feel very strongly on this point because mine were all taken away to be looked after by someone else; and it was *relations* that did it.

Some mothers say that they only love their children when they are at the cuddly stage; that afterwards they become so much trouble. What I should have liked would have been the afterwards. Children are such fascinating things to watch growing, far more amusing and interesting than animals or flowers or vegetables. Even Sheila was interesting in a fat sort of way; and even she was taken away from me when Roger died.

XVII

ROGER died of abscess of the brain. It was very sad. Father said that it was most fortunate; that most mad people lived for ages. I suppose it *was* lucky in a way: he might have been so much worse. At the last he suffered very little, poor dear! He passed away in my arms, and I think—yes, I am quite sure—that he was very sorry for all his unkindness to me—before he died. His last words were: “What a fool I’ve been! What a fool!” Before the end he became quite peaceful; and whenever I kissed him, he would smile.

If only he hadn’t gone mad I am sure that we should have been the happiest of couples, for he really did love me tremendously. But he *would* spend his time trying to cure lunatics.

Looking back on my life with Roger I must say that I think I was a most devoted wife to him. There are not very many women who would nurse a mad husband for two years and three months, are there?

One thing was rather mean of Roger; I don’t know when he did it—sometime when I was out getting a breath of fresh air I suppose—he made a new will. When first we were married we made, each of us, a will leaving everything to the other;

and both wills were in my strong box at the bank. It was rather a shock when Mr F——, a beastly little lawyer, whom I hated, produced another will, when Roger was safely buried, countermanding the first and leaving everything, with the exception of two hundred a year, in trust for Sheila. As if I couldn't have been trusted to look after my own child! And—still more disgusting!—naming his mother and the same little beast of a lawyer as trustees. Roger knew very well that I didn't like his mother, and that I hated all lawyers.

Of course he was quite mad when he made the will, and father wanted me to contest it. But law courts *are* such unpleasant places, aren't they? Always raking up horrid things about one. Besides, I never have been mercenary.

Trustees have been the bane of my life. I wonder why people prefer to trust anyone else other than their own wives. Most unnatural I think. Money was made to be spent, not put in trust. I don't suppose that there ever was a woman who has had so many trustees as I have had. Two from poor dear Edward, two from Roger, and three—but I mustn't anticipate.

I gave Sheila to Roger's mother. It was quite certain that she would get her whatever I did, so I put a cheerful face on the matter and let her go to Ireland. Roger's mother wanted me to go too, but I had had quite enough of the Irish.

It was a delightful change to be my own mistress again, and I felt just like a girl "coming out" for the first time. I was young, and the long nursing

of Roger had given me a sort of *spirituelle* look. Not a wrinkle! and the French are quite right, children do improve one's figure—if one takes care. I had only four hundred a year, but all my children were being looked after, and I was free, absolutely free for the first time in my life.

People were meant to be free, I think. None of us were born to be slaves. No wonder the working classes are striking for more play and less work. After all it is only freedom they are fighting for. Poor dears! they have had enough slavery in all conscience, and precious little freedom. Slavery to their parents first of all, then to their school masters, then to other masters. Why should there be masters? I don't see why everyone shouldn't work together and play together. I never had any slaves—at least not real slaves; even Tiny, who is the only person who looks upon me—even now—as her mistress, is more of a friend than anything else; and she only calls me “milady” in public.

I am awfully keen on Liberty, and if ever I go into Politics (I suppose politics has a capital P) it will be as a champion of freedom. One can appreciate what one hasn't had—at least only a taste of. I have written a lovely poem about Liberty, which I am setting to music; it is far jollier than the “Red Flag” (the song the Socialists sing), which is rather common I think.

If any woman ever really made a quick move, I did when I left Harley Street. I simply got

Mary to pack up—I took her with me as maid, gave all the other servants two months' wages, and left. The front door key I sent Mr F——, my trustee, with instructions to do what he liked with everything.

Within four hours of the funeral I was at B——'s Hotel. I like B——'s Hotel; everyone knows me there, and they are very kind and obliging.

I suppose people thought that I was cold and unkind. I know a great many of the mourners did. But I felt that I couldn't stay in that awful house another night.

I do think funerals are terribly trying, don't you? No sooner is the corpse dead than the vultures—in the shape of sorrowing relatives—come pouncing down. While the coffin is still in the house one can see them looking at things; after the funeral it's awful! "Of course that is mine, what use could *she* have for dear Aunt Jemima's portrait? By Solomon or Simpkin or Somebody—R.A. too, and *signed* my dear!" or "The poor boy always promised *me* that," or "Isn't that a lovely fruit basket? real Georgian! with the family crest, too; *she* can't claim that; and the dear boy always——" It is positively indecent how relations behave after a funeral.

When I told Roger's mother that I was going, she looked——. "You can't! with the poor dear boy scarcely buried," was what she said.

"Let the dead bury their dead," said I. And I added so that everyone could hear: "You can all squabble over these sticks to your hearts' con-

tent; I won't! I make you a free gift of them all; that is if Roger hasn't."

Then I left.

There was a sale afterwards I heard. I expect that the two trustees got most. They sent me a set of Roger's shirt studs and an old bible.

No one has ever called me grabbing.

NUMBER THREE

GEORGE—MY THIRD

I

AS this book deals with my three husbands, and not me, I must skip several—well one year and seven months to be exact, which was the interval between poor Roger and Number Three.

It was planchette—or the “Ouija board” as the Americans call it—that persuaded me to marry George. I hadn’t the slightest intention of marrying anyone—in fact Roger had given me a positive distaste for matrimony, and I didn’t even know of George’s existence. It *was* rather curious I think.

Now there is more in planchette than meets the eye. Of course everyone knows it is a little piece of wood, cut in the shape of a heart, and mounted on three little wheels, with a pencil stuck through. The pencil is for the spirits to write with. Sometimes when the spirits were shy I used to make it write myself, and as a matter of fact I am rather

clever at guiding it in the way it should go. But I could scarcely have made it write the name of a man of whom I had never even heard, could I?

At that time I and Gwen, my eldest sister (I have mentioned her before somewhere), and two friends (men) were investigating Spiritualism, which was not fashionable as it is now. Really we were pioneers and frightfully keen, and we had discovered all sorts of strange things about table rapping and turning, flying banjoes, and weird materialisations; in fact we were considered experts, rather mad. Great fun! On this particular evening we were consulting planchette.

One of the first rules to remember about planchette is darkness. There are several reasons why one must be in the dark. Of these the two most important are: because it is far easier to concentrate one's mind; and because it is far more difficult to make planchette write what one wants it to—in the dark.

Gwen was very poor at planchette; it simply wouldn't do anything for her. With me it behaved splendidly. Many people have told me that I am psychic; I am. At that time I was working with Captain A——, rather a fine looking man in the Hussars; I rather think he has appeared in these pages before. Captain A—— was always such a tractable, docile creature, not in the least psychic, that I rather liked to work with him. With me he worked splendidly, rather on the principle of the positive and negative wires in electricity; I being the positive and he the negative. Of course one

can't be quite sure about these things, as there is bound to be a lot of guess work about the Unknown. But at all events as soon as our fingers touched one could feel a sort of current; and then planchette would simply prance along.

We used to keep a black book—black is always such a respectable colour I think—and enter in it all the questions and answers. Most scientific I can assure you. I remember one series—most wonderful! I and Captain A—— were in control.

“What are YOU?” we asked, as soon as It began to move.

“A WOMAN” (beautifully written in capitals).

“How can YOU be a woman if you are a spirit?”

“Spirit of a woman.”

“Are you a *good* spirit?”

“No—Yes—No—Yes.” We asked this question several times, always with the same result. I thought that it was good because the last word was Yes, and being a woman she was quite entitled to change her mind. Captain A—— agreed. The others said no, because the first word was No. So we entered: “Open to discussion” in the book—in brackets.

“Is it wrong for us to consult you?”

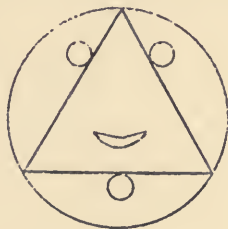
“Yes—No—Yes—No.” This was rather puzzling, for the Yes and the No had changed places. However, we all decided that it couldn't be wrong; and so we entered “Ditto” in the book—in brackets.

The next question involved rather a long dis-

cussion, and when we did ask it planchette behaved so badly that we thought that we must have lost touch with our woman. To make sure, Captain A——, rather sensible at times, suggested asking for a sign. Quite a brilliant suggestion.

“Please (it is always well to ask planchette nicely) give us a *sign*, so that we can recognise you.”

And then it produced the following figure:



Now anyone who knows anything about drawing or Euclid—and most people do nowadays—must realise how difficult it is to draw a circle without a pair of compasses. We had no compasses. Afterwards we all tried hard to make planchette draw a circle. Quite impossible. And yet there was the figure staring at us as large as life. It was most uncanny. Then again no one could interpret the figure. I thought that it was meant to represent a spirit face. Captain A—— said that it certainly did look like it; at the same time he revoked his former opinion and thought that she must be a wicked woman. Gwen thought that it was a Cubist portrait of the spirit. Mr de la

M——, Gwen's partner, insisted that it was a combination of zodiacal signs; he looked it up afterwards, but couldn't find anything exactly like it. So we left it a mystery; rather extraordinary.

On this particular evening I and Captain A—— were working planchette, while Gwen and Mr de la M—— were listening. We had asked all sorts of questions and were sitting with our fingers touching when suddenly planchette began to write. When it had stopped we turned up the light and read:

"Message for G."

Of course G was for Gwen, who got very excited.

"Please give us the message," we asked.

"No—No—No."

That was rather a stumper. Captain A—— suggested that Gwen should ask It herself. Gwen asked it something, but refused to tell us what it was. Again It dashed out three frantic No's.

"Ask It if you are going to marry Mr McD——," I suggested. Gwen was supposed to be in love with Mr McD——, who was a young Scotch lawyer, rather ugly, but quite clever and amusing. She did like him tremendously, I know; but he was rather a poor *parti*, and father did not approve.

I could see that there was an awful struggle going on in Gwen's mind—for planchette can be most canny. After a time she said: "All right." Captain A—— and I sat down again, and pinned

down a clean sheet of paper. Mr de la M—— turned out the lights. And we were off.

"Ask It nicely, out loud," I ordered Gwen.

"What difference *can* it make?" Gwen was rather shy really.

"All the difference in the world," said Mr de la M——.

"Go on, Gwen," I said. I could feel the current itching to get to work.

"Will I ever marry Dennis, please?" came a sad little quaver from Gwen.

"Steady the Buffs!" said Mr de la M——; he was in the Civil Service.

Planchette bounded forward.

Presently It stopped; Mr de la M—— hurriedly turned on the light; and Gwen gave a shriek and turned ghastly white. A large NO (in capitals) was on the paper.

"Hard luck!" said Mr de la M——; he was awfully fond of Gwen and would have made her a splendid husband if he hadn't been so poor too. Isn't it sad how poor men are always so much nicer—that is, in themselves—than rich ones? Then he turned to me—he was rather angry because Gwen refused to be comforted:

"Now then, Mrs O——, it's your turn."

"Please, who am I going to marry next time?" I asked It. I am not shy.

"Rather a tax on Its imagination, what?" said Captain A——.

"It's got no imagination, being a Spirit," I said. And he subsided.

And then it was that planchette did the most extraordinary thing that I have ever seen It do. It wrote a name that none of us even knew:

“ SIR GEORGE L——.”

II

UNTIL we looked him up in “ Debrett ” not one of us knew anything about my future Number Three. Then we discovered that he actually did exist and that he was altogether most suitable. His name was George; he was a baronet—nothing new and nasty, the fifteenth; he owned S—— Court in Somerset, several square miles and villages in Devon, hundreds of square miles in Scotland, a few farms in Ireland, and a town house among other things; and he was just ten years older than myself; and English; and of course quite well off.

It was rather exciting and we all drank to his health. They wanted to drink to mine, at least Captain A—— did, but I said: “ No! That in all probability it was Gwen who would marry Sir George L——; that planchette had stated very clearly that It had a message for Gwen.

“ But Gwen—er Miss D—— got hers,” said Mr de la M——.

“ Perhaps it was only the first instalment,” said I. But something told me that it was not for Gwen. At times I am awfully psychic.

III

WHAT probably happened, I think, was that some sort of Telepathy was set going between George and myself; that is that our subconscious minds began to communicate—I was thinking about him quite a lot—on the wireless telegraph principle.

Somehow I am quite certain that there is far more in Telepathy than most people imagine. If sound travels in waves why shouldn't thoughts? After all wireless telegraphy is nothing but two instruments in tune with each other. So I can't see why two minds in tune with one another shouldn't be able to communicate; and I am sure that thought does travel in waves. Just look how this League of Nations' thought has travelled. A Persian Prophet, called the Bab, invented it years ago, so I'm told. Then it went to Tolstoy in Russia. After him to Mr Wilson in America. And now everybody is thinking about it—or at least talking about it. Then just notice how our Literature has changed, quite suddenly. In Victorian days authors wrote novels all about life and people, and they were rather particular about their style; in fact they must have studied writing as an Art. Nowadays anyone can write, and no one bothers about style or form or how words should be used. Words

are nothing to us modern authors; and when all is said and done what's in a word? What really counts is the *spirit* behind the words. The Victorians were very materialistic; we are distinctly *spirituelle*—rather an improvement, I think.

The change in Literature is another example of Telepathy. People nowadays haven't the time to read very much, and they want the essence of the thing in as few words as possible; rather an advantage to the publishers too, now that paper is so scarce. Of course I know that some people say that we authors, if we took a little more time and trouble with our works, ought to be able to wrap up our spiritual ideas in nice language. But that would mean hard work, and work isn't very popular with us writers; then again we must speed up production like everything else. Anyhow it's a very good thing I think that the Public is not too critical about style, otherwise so many of us wouldn't be able to write books. I am quite sure that I shouldn't have been able to in Victorian days.

Then again the same thought has communicated itself to our painters and composers. Some old-fashioned people dislike the Futurists; I don't. It is quite easy to see what the matter is with them; they think that they have got messages to give—spiritual messages, and they can't be bothered with external trifles; besides they are in a hurry. Our composers are just the same, all in a great hurry, and all yearning after the Unseen. It is a sort of artistic Christian Science sweeping over the world. Matter is nothing. I felt that way once—just a

little—when I was a Christian Scientist. Now I know better; I suppose I have grown out of that stage.

Matter is something, in spite of all our authors, artists, composers, and Christian Scientists. Matter, that is, *natural* matter, is extremely beautiful. Poor dear Edward was quite right. Nature is never out of perspective, out of proportion, nor ugly; Nature is never ugly. It is when *we* create things that they are ugly. I hate ugliness in any shape or form (I think I mentioned that before), and I don't care one brass farthing what people or even critics say, if a thing is ugly, then I know that it is Bad. A thing that is Good must be Beautiful. If I am beautiful, really beautiful, there must be a great deal of good in me. Whoever said that "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is quite right; because we each one of us can recognise Beauty when we see it. The trouble is that so many of us are afraid to trust our own judgment. If only everyone trusted themselves and judged *things* by their Beauty, the world would become a very different place. But we are so tied down by Fashion and Convention and Other People's Opinions; at least most people are. I'm not.

Returning to Telepathy, I've got a theory that Telepathy was the Universal Language before the Tower of Babel days; and they say that woman is incapable of original thought!

While I am on biblical notions, I once had another Telepathic communication. For years and years heaps of people have been trying to solve

the mystery of what happened to Cain and his descendants. Some say that they became Germans, because they (the Germans) have got square heads and rather an unpleasant manner. One night—these things always come to me at night—the answer came in a flash. I wasn't even thinking about the wretched Cain and I don't know what brought him into my mind; I suddenly thought about *the mark* and how God had said that he and his descendants should be wanderers on the face of the earth, and how no one should kill or harm them. And all at once something said, as clear as anything: "MONKEYS." George, my third husband—this part is about him—was fearfully impressed when I told him about it at breakfast next morning. He wanted me to write a book on it.

"You see, my dear," he said, "what better mark than a tail? and monkeys are wanderers, and no one kills them—at least not more than once. They cry so horribly, my dear; just like a child, my dear; most uncanny, my dear."

And then he told a long story about some friend of his who had once shot a monkey in mistake for a tiger. It (the story) lasted all breakfast time, and before it was finished I was sorry that I had mentioned monkeys.

That was George all over. He *would* talk; and he *was* so uninteresting—just like a brook babbling—most monotonous! Nothing could stop George once he had got properly started. On and on and on he would go—between mouthfuls; and one *had* to listen. There was only one consolation—it

gave one plenty of time to plan some brilliant repartee.

I had him about the monkeys. When he had quite finished—he always coughed when he had quite finished—I said, very sweetly :

“ But, George, didn't the Bible say that the mark was on their foreheads ? ”

IV

GOODNESS knows what George was doing at Biarritz, for he disliked Society and didn't skate nor ski. He said that he was there for his health ; and he certainly seemed to hate the place. He was lonely too, anyone could see that, always taking long tramps by himself ; and as for things feminine, he actually seemed terrified at the mere sight of a skirt.

I must say it was an awful shock to find that George was staying in the very same hotel that I had carefully selected. And the funny part about it was that while I had chosen it for its reputed gaiety, he had decided upon it for its excellent *cuisine* and seclusion.

It always is a shock when one meets one's future husband for the first time. Somehow one seems

to know—that is if one is psychic like I am. I suppose that it's a sort of magnetic current that begins working, anyhow one can almost always *feel* something. In George's case it was much stronger than in Roger's or poor dear Edward's; probably because of planchette.

George was very shy with women. I think it was because he imagined that he was a good catch and wanted to protect himself; he certainly had the instinct of self-preservation very acutely, not that I recognised it at the time, but I found out about it afterwards. However, he got well over it, poor darling. Now I like shy men, in fact I like all men—as I think I mentioned before; and I can manage shy men. It is really quite easy. The secret is: (I'm divulging it in case any of my poor million unmarried sisters know a shy man who is also eligible) *To avoid them*. Most shy men are fair. George was almost an albino; a'l but the eyes. I don't think I could stand a pink-eyed man. Now fair men are funny creatures. Some women think them *difficile* because they are silent and reserved. Other women take them for towers of strength for the same reason. Not a bit of it. They appear all these things on account of their excessive shyness. Again a fair man is always suspicious—another trait of shyness; and he always jumps to conclusions. A fair man seldom thinks much, and his brain works more slowly than that of a dark man. A fair man is generally tall; and he always thinks that people—women especially—are excessively interested in him. He is almost

always conceited—George was. Shyness and conceit are very closely allied.

A fair man, like a fair woman, likes to be liked. He always wants to be the silent centre piece or corner stone in a crowd. So long as one *looks* at him he is delighted; but if one *speaks* to him he becomes suspicious.

The right way to acquire the heartfelt hatred of a fair man is to try to be nice and charming and vivacious to him. Then he immediately jumps to the conclusion that one is *after* him, or that one wants to borrow something.

The only way to attract his attention is to ignore him; to go about one's business as if one hadn't even noticed his existence. In fact to act in his presence as if one was rather more shy and more suspicious and more silent than himself. Then he will immediately decide that you must be someone after his own heart, and perhaps even more important than himself.

A fair man is like a child. It is quite useless making advances to a child. One must wait until they make advances. They will; if one takes no notice of them.

George was the most eligible bachelor in Biarritz; so naturally every woman in the Hotel was openly after him. Several young Americans were positively indecent the way they dogged his footprints in the snow and tried to fall downstairs into his arms.

Of course I could have had George introduced to me the very first day, we had several mutual

friends in the place, but I said no. Fair men are always romantic at heart; and George should have his Romance. Being English, very conservative, and shy it was equally certain that Romance would have to take George by the hand—very gently but firmly—and lead him—also very gently and firmly; otherwise he would be likely to take Her for something else. I rather wished, I remember, that I had not given up mourning; black always suits fair people.

For three weeks I avoided George. On several occasions I saw him buttonhole a friend of mine—a man of course, and I could imagine from the glances in my direction what he was talking about. But at the first step in my direction I would bolt.

George became more and more interested. Once he almost spoke to me on the stairs. He had a room somewhere on the roof; he was always most economical. I shrunk shyly to one side. He stood stock-still, and I could feel him eyeing me as I walked down—rather faster than usual.

Another thing that impressed George tremendously was that I didn't ski nor skate. It *was* rather a trial for I love skating; but George was to be my third husband, planchette said so.

Heaps of people, even philosophers say that happy marriages are most frequent between ill-assorted couples, that is between the pair whose tastes are utterly different on every point. Rubbish! Like attracts like, if it doesn't it is the exception that proves the rule. Poor dear Edward loved me because in some things I was

like him. Roger loved me for the same reason, but for other things. The woman who wants to win a man and keep his love must have similar tastes to that man ; if she hasn't got them naturally, she must cultivate them artificially. Similarity is the essence of real love. Dissimilarity is the road to the Divorce Court. A woman who marries a doctor must interest herself in his patients ; I did—that is, in the men patients. A woman who marries a soldier must study soldiering. Poor dear Edward was a soldier, and everyone said that I was a splendid soldier's wife.

If a man is worth marrying he is certainly worth cultivating ; and the theory of cultivating anything must be studied. Sisters, study your lovers and your husbands. And if you study them carefully you will find a lot of good in them ; then you can cultivate that good. All my husbands improved vastly under my treatment. With another woman Edward might have become a deserter. Roger would probably have developed into a dissolute rake, and George would most certainly have been an " indispensable." With me none of these things happened. They all died ; but that was hardly *my* fault.

While I was avoiding him I studied George very carefully. I avoided him because I saw that he appreciated being avoided. I gave up skating because he didn't skate. He used to write occasional letters to the " Times " ; I sent several letters to the " Daily Mail " ; some were printed. He was frightfully keen on books ; I became so.

He loved killing things; I killed things. He hunted a good deal—he had his own pack of Harriers; I hunted a good deal. At Biarritz he was convalescing from something or other; so was I.

There is more Romance in books than in real life, I think, and it was a book that led George to me. I used to sit out on the verandah in a fur coat, convalescing and reading. I had discovered a lovely corner from where I could see what was happening outside. George discovered the corner, and one day I found him sitting next to my chair. I was in two minds about bolting, but he looked so lost to the world in an old book—I couldn't even see the name, it was so old—that I decided to sit down. I had a lovely book with me, the "Life and Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning." I always think that Elizabeth Barrett must have been such an interesting invalid and certainly she was a woman who knew how to win and keep a husband. Then again she was wonderful the way she turned her liabilities into assets. So many people—women especially—make such a fuss about their liabilities, if they haven't got a thing, so often they sit and grumble about it. Always most boring to beholders.

If one has not got a thing one should either make up one's mind to *get* it—if it is something that one can get, like a husband— or else to make other people realise how happy one is in not having it—like physical strength or cleverness.

I was very interested in my book, so was George

—after a little while. I could feel him glancing surreptitiously at it every now and again; when he wasn't looking at me. Presently I heard a bang; his old book had fallen or he had thrown it down. Then he coughed. He had rather a nasty cough, and I wondered whether he felt cold, he hadn't a rug or a fur coat; and I remembered that he had been ill, poor fellow. It was rather a struggle not to speak.

He coughed again. Presently he got up and walked past me to the edge of the verandah. Several times he looked at me out of the corner of one eye. Then he sat down again. He was cold; poor dear his nose was beginning to look quite blue. I remember wondering whether he drank. I really couldn't stand it any longer; besides I had two rugs and a fur coat.

"Won't you have one of my rugs?" I said. "You must be cold; and really you should take care of yourself if only for your wife's sake."

"I'm not married," he said. "And thanks awfully. Are you sure you can spare it? *You* mustn't get cold, you know, and *you* must be precious to a lot of people."

"John," his eyes goggled, "might miss me," I said. "And Evelyn" —he sighed—thankfully I thought, "and Edward, and—no I don't think that Sheila would mind what happened to me."

"Four?" —he seemed rather anxious.

"All with their grandmothers."

"And, and your husband?"

"Two," I said. He stared wildly. "Both dead."

"And you are all alone?"

"All alone."

"You poor little——"

"Don't you like her?" And I held out Elizabeth Barrett.

"I think she's the most wonderful woman in the world," said George.

Little did George know that only the week before I had wired for her. Men always like Mrs Browning. She is so romantic, isn't she?

V

GEORGE didn't in the least mind about poor dear Edward, or Roger, or little John, or Evelyn, or Edward, or Sheila. He even laughed about Edward's brother and his wife. Honesty (with simplicity) is always the best policy in matrimonial ventures. If a man knows that you have been a good wife to two husbands, and loved them, naturally he feels fairly certain that you will love *him* and make *him* a good wife. Practice always does make perfect.

I have no patience with silly creatures who cram their lovers with lies. What is the good of it?

Truth will out. And what on earth is the use of marrying a man, and then losing his love? I must say I do like efficiency in all things. Inefficient servants or workmen I can't stand. And an inefficient wife is, to me, the most pitiable of animals. The woman who wants, above all things, to marry and have children and a happy home and a loving husband must learn to be efficient. If that is one's chosen profession—and with most of us it is—we must make up our minds to make good at it. One can feel sorry for the suffering and sick, but it is quite beyond me to show sympathy for the inefficient woman who has rushed into matrimony merely for the sake of finding someone to support her, and who is too lazy to make any return for that support. Divorce is too good for them; they ought to be—educated.

I know that most of us like to grumble about our husbands and complain that they are *difficile*. I have done so myself. But after all it is the difficult thing that is most worth doing; any fool can do an easy thing. Some men are such good-natured easy-going creatures that anyone can marry them, and they will be good to anyone. So are some women. These are the salt of the earth, always staid and stolid and wholesome, never temperamental. Roger was horribly temperamental; poor dear Edward half and half; and George was pure salt until—but I mustn't anticipate. Anyone could have married George; and I can't understand how he escaped matrimony for so long—probably because his huntresses didn't know

much about hunting—big game. I do; I have shot tigers on foot with poor dear Edward.

George proposed five days after the book episode. One can cram a lot into five days, and really I was getting rather tired of convalescence. People nowadays must have plenty of Love, so the publishers say, and my shorthand typist who is writing this (no, he is not a "ghost" but rather a nice boy) tells me that I haven't said enough about Love. So I suppose I must.

Of course one can't really write about Love unless one happens to be a J—— G——, or a C—— G——, that is no one who has ever felt Love even remotely. Love is too big to be put into small print. No writers of genius ever write of Love; being big themselves—they know how enormous Love is. They may just skirt the shores of the Big Sea; but they leave the swimming about in it to the little fishes.

Some men are professional lovers and naturally they know all about making love nicely. They understand all the little tricks of the trade: the impassioned gestures, the half-pathetic semi-rapturous sighs, the lowered lashes, the laboured breathing, the rumpled hair, the nicely modulated tone of passionate pleading, the hoarse cry of triumph. All this they know; but they don't know how silly it all seems to the woman who has been loved before.

Personally I can't stand professional lovers at any price, perhaps because I know all their little ways. When I was young—that is very young—

they used sometimes to amuse me; and some few times they very nearly did deceive me. Fortunately something in the back of my brain always came to my rescue. There are times, when one is feeling dreadfully bored, or tired, or out of sorts, when one can listen to love-making by a professional; just as poets go off by themselves to listen to a brook babbling I suppose. But not when one is healthy and sane and happy.

George had never made love before. Not that it would have made much difference how he did it, for I knew that he was going to be my husband, and I had quite made up my mind to accept him.

It happened, just as everything in life happens, quite simply; and the scene was the same verandah and the same corner. We were sitting (rather closer together) after dinner. Except for ourselves the place was deserted. There was a moon, I remember, and the great snow-bowed trees looked almost mysterious in the pale light. All the world outside seemed dead; even the sounds of revelry from the Hotel came to us very faintly. We might have been alone in the middle of nowhere, George and I.

For a long time we sat in silence; somehow words seemed out of place—too small—in all that great silence.

"You're not cold?" asked George presently.

"Cold! Who could feel cold with all this beauty? It's wonderful! Makes one want to die of sheer delight; and how tiny it makes one feel," I whispered.

"It's you who are wonderful," said George.

It was coming; but I would put it off for a little longer. "Just look at that great mountain"—George drew his chair nearer—"looking down at us almost pityingly: We little things come and go, and there it stands while Time lasts, an eternal monument to the Creator."

George was very religious, in a conventional sort of way. Most men are. He took my hand—the one nearest to him.

"And He made *you*," he said.

"Hush! you mustn't say such things here, they sound almost sacrilege."

"Love isn't sacrilege," said George.

"Love! Love! Who knows what Love is?" I whispered, trying to withdraw my hand.

"I do," said George—very positively.

And then . . . oh! it's no use! I can't give George away even in a book.

VI

THE last chapter looks rather cold in type. My amanuensis says that it is not half *strong* enough, that I missed a splendid opportunity of writing something really popular. Perhaps I did, but somehow Popularity seems less important now than when I started to write. Perhaps the love of

popular approval is only a part of me. I don't mind putting my own thoughts into print, but I can't sell my friends'; and again I might be wrong about them, although I am so wonderfully psychic. Perhaps the reason is that I am still a teeny bit Victorian.

We were engaged for six months, and having no wish to marry George under false pretences I introduced him to little John, and Evelyn, and Edward, and I even persuaded Roger's mother to bring Sheila over from Ireland. George took it all quite nicely and said that they were most healthy children. In fact I could see that he was most impressed by their appearance; and I could feel the thought in his head: that I would undoubtedly be a good mother for his son and heir.

George being a Baronet naturally wanted a son to succeed him; otherwise the property and title would go to a cousin whom he hated. I met him somewhere—a Captain in the Life Guards—and I must say that he looked at me most suspiciously. I suppose I am rather like that; I soon forget past troubles in the matter of the moment. Anyhow I made up my mind then and there, Sheila or no Sheila, come what might that *he* should *not* be George's heir. I don't know what George would have thought had he been psychic like myself, for we weren't even married when I reached this determination.

George was very kind to the children; step-fathers-to-be always are. Some widows may be deceived by these kind intentions; certainly I have

heard lots of them say that they are marrying So and So "because he is so fond of the children, my dear; and I am *sure* he will be an excellent father to them."

I had previous experience with a step-father, now I have had two, so I think I am qualified to say that no step-fathers are good fathers to any but their own children. After all, it isn't natural that they should be. One finds—before the wedding—that they will all pretend to be devoted, but it is so obviously pretence, and they always appeal to the step-children's pockets, never to their hearts.

I must confess that I had an ulterior motive—not connected with myself—in marrying George. Little John was growing up—he was fourteen, so were Evelyn, and Edward, and I did think that married to George I should be able to make the Chancery Court give them back to me. Also I thought that S—— Court would be a lovely place for them to spend their holidays. Of course I said nothing of this to George.

Curiously enough the only one of the children who did not like the idea of another step-father was little John.

"That's not my father," he said, after the first interview. "My father was a fine man—a soldier."

"But this father is a fine man too," I urged. "He's a Baronet. Everyone calls him 'Sir'——"

"We call the masters at school 'Sir,' " interrupted little John.

"That's different! Only small boys call masters Sir. Everyone respects your new father."

"I don't," said little John.

"Why?"

"Because he's a conceited ass."

VII

THE wedding was a splendid affair, and George's mother—all my husbands had mothers—was really a most regal-looking old lady—rather wrinkled. She certainly did everything most beautifully. George was her only son and her husband had been dead for many years, he was killed in the hunting field when George was quite young.

I rather fancy that George's mother did her level best to persuade him not to marry me. I know she did emphatically not like me; but George was most obstinate. He was one of those men who always say "yes" and mean "no." Yes always saves arguments and in itself means very little after all. I used to call him "I go, sir; and went not." George was rather in awe of his mother, and never contradicted her. I did. As she had not been used to contradiction she instinctively disliked the contradictor. I know she had definitely decided years ago that the right wife for George was a lady of the name of Ursula, daughter of Sir S—

W—— who lived in the same county. After the wedding we became quite friendly. She was perfectly harmless, rather robust, and devoted to George. I didn't blame George in the least for not marrying her; I wouldn't have done.

George's mother took rather a fancy to father, who was of course at the wedding, and afterwards very prominent at the reception. In fact father was quite the master of ceremonies, and I must say he looked most distinguished. Uncle Walter, rather worn and less lively than usual, turned up in full gala kit, same old check waistcoat, striped flannel trousers, and grey top hat. He drank surprisingly little champagne—for him, said it was rotten bad stuff; it may have been for all I know, certainly George's mother was always most thrifty.

I enjoyed everything most awfully; I always do. And it *was* rather a *coup* to have captured George. That day at any rate father was proud of me. So was mother in her sweet, gentle little way. As for my sisters, poor things, it *must* have been a trial, for they were still unmarried. Gwendolyn did her best to spoil things by whispering: "How *could* you—after Edward?" She was always rather fond of poor dear Edward. But I wasn't going to be upset by anyone.

George had suggested spending the honeymoon—where do you suppose? at a little place where he said he had been as a boy, on the shores of Loch Lomond, "lovely, my jewel," called Inveruglas. I told him all about Inveruglas and poor dear Edward—at least not quite all. So we decided

to go to Paris instead. I wanted some new frocks.

I always believe in frankness; it pays. There is nothing in the world more disarming than absolute frankness; it is far more efficacious than any subtlety. Subtlety is quite useless with subtle people; while frankness knocks them "Galliway West" (an expression that George was very fond of). George was subtle; he had learnt it from his mother, I suppose. So with him I was frankness itself—with all the *sang froid* of a child. In some ways George was rather an old maid; fearfully finnicky about nothing, rather snobbish—not his fault, poor dear, and horribly addicted to gossip with other men, really because he hadn't enough to do. I cured him.

The cure commenced in Paris. George, remembering Inveruglas and poor dear Edward I suspect, had ordered a suite of rooms at the Palais Royal Hotel. The suite consisted of sitting-room, my bedroom, a bath-room, and George's bedroom. The sitting-room was in the middle—rather a bad arrangement. At the end of the first week, George, after an extra hearty dinner, broached the subject of conjugal relationship.

"You know—er—my jewel, that in our walk in life husband and wife have separate rooms. At S—— Court our rooms are quite a long way—er—apart; one can't be too particular how one—er—behaves these days in our—er—walk in life. Servants will talk. So, my jewel, I would suggest"—two or three coughs—"that—er—" another

cough or two—"when you would—er——". I looked at him between the eyes, as poor, dear Edward had taught me to do when facing a savage animal. George withered perceptibly, poured himself a brandy and soda, gulped down most of it, and continued: "when you would—er condescend to appreciate my appearance, you might leave your shoes outside your door, old girl."

"What for?" I asked.

"Well—er—as a sign that you—er—would be—er—willing to——"

"George, don't you realise that I have been married three times?" I said. "Why all this hypocritical humbug?"

"My dear, it's always done in our walk in life."

"Is it? And how do you know?" I asked, raising my eyebrows—rather a fetching habit of mine.

"Well—er——"

"Why don't you say that your mother told you so, George?"

He swallowed the rest of the brandy and soda. Then he resumed the conversation:

"You see, my jewel, shoes are such innocent little things, quite above suspicion; and servants talk so. My mother says——"

"Divil take the servants, and the shoes, and your—well never mind," said I.

George collapsed. I continued:

"Now, George, let us be frank. Either we are married or we are not. Either marriage is indecent or it is not. If you expect to see my shoes outside

my door you will have to wait until Doomsday; and then there won't be any shoes. Besides the servants would take them down to clean."

"Well what do you suggest, old lady?"

"That you write and tell your mother that S—— Court is not big enough for all of us."

VIII

My third honeymoon lasted just two weeks. I must say that George looked rather uncomfortable (a promising sign) as he told me that we were expected home for the house party that invariably ushered in the shooting season. Of course the truth of the matter was that he considered two weeks in Paris a veritable orgy of extravagance; he was fearfully stingy when I married him; a legacy from his mother. But I must say that George did improve wonderfully under my treatment. At first, even on the honeymoon, one literally had to exact the where-with-all-to-buy-things from him forcibly; after a few years he would write cheques comparatively calmly.

Our arrival home was an excuse for a village bean feast. At the station a deputation of local lights met us; words of welcome from the station-master—a dear old man—followed; then a

procession headed by a brass band—horrid thing! I never have been able to understand why village musicians don't study music before they blossom out into bands, perhaps they haven't the time. All along the route were flags, cheering school children, and speeches. I threw handfuls of coppers, provided for the occasion; everyone—including the school master—seemed to scramble for them; perhaps they wanted mementoes of the great occasion. At the lodge gates a team of lusty yokels replaced the horses and a large white banner with "Welcome to Our Lady" in red looked most fetching. The avenue—really lovely with the autumn tints—was hung, rather sparsely, with Chinese lanterns (I don't believe they were ever lit). The arrival. Reception by prominent citizens, more speeches: by the Vicar, the Agent, and several other people. And then the great door opened, and there was George's mother with a set smile; behind her the butler; and a crowd of awe-struck retainers lined the walls—I suppose they were rather anxious to see what their new mistress looked like, and feared the worst, poor dears. All most impressive and, *entre nous*, rather amusing; all but George's mother.

And I had told George to get rid of his mother.

The trouble was that George was simply terrified of his mother, anyone could see that. Now I hate to see human beings terrified of other human beings; it isn't human. And to see a great overgrown creature like George positively shivering

before a wretched little wizened old thing like his mother annoyed me excessively. Besides, he hadn't written to her as I told him. From the first moment that we pecked each other's cheeks on the doorstep I had made up my mind to stand no nonsense from her. "Twice bitten, thrice determined," was my motto, invented on the spur of the moment that I smiled sweetly at her grim old face. It was war to the knife; we both knew it; and I knew who was going to win.

George's mother was quite the hostess, showed me to my rooms—bedroom and boudoir adjoining; presented a gawky, red-faced farm girl as my maid; and suggested that I had better have some dinner sent up as I looked tired.

"Thanks," I said sweetly. "I am *never* tired."

"But, my *dear* child, you look so delicate. You really must take care of yourself, if only for George's sake."

"I'm as strong as a horse," I replied, still smiling.

"Then you *will* come down?"

"Of course."

"Well you haven't much time, my dear; dinner is at seven-thirty sharp, and Smithers (the cook as I found out later) hates to be kept waiting."

I looked at my watch—a little beauty that Roger had given me years ago.

"What a dear little watch! I suppose dear George bought that for you in Paris. French watches *are* so nice and reliable, I think."

"Yes; isn't it jolly," I said, holding it up for

her to see. "It cost (I hate pricing things, but she was such an old beast) fifty guineas!"

"Good gracious!"—I waited patiently—"How extravagant of George. No, my dear child; please do not misunderstand me. I am not casting any aspersion upon *you*, but George; really George should have known better."

"But I think it's lovely to be able to give beautiful presents to people one loves, don't you?" I can look so innocent when I want to.

"Well; yes; I suppose so. I, unfortunately, have never been in the position to give such expensive presents."

"Not even to your husband?"

"Not even to my husband."

"Not even to poor George?"

"Not even to my dear son George."

"And hasn't George ever given you any really expensive presents?"

"My child, you will soon realise that George is not by any means a wealthy man. That fifty guineas—fifty wasn't it you said?—would have repaired two or three of our tenants' roofs that are sadly in need of renewal."

"Are they?" said I. "I will soon see to that; and they shall have really nice roofs, poor things."

George's mother sniffed—several times. Then a gong rang somewhere.

"My *dear* child, do you know it is now five minutes to seven, and Smithers is so upset when people are late. Are you *quite* sure you have *everything*?"

I nodded; and she moved to the door.

"I shall be down at eight o'clock," said I. "I always take an hour to dress. And please keep something hot. And if you think Smithers will be angry, I will just run down and see her."

"My *dear* child!"

"And, *dear* mama, it wasn't George that gave me the fifty guinea watch. It was poor dear Roger, my second husband you know; such a dear, generous boy."

IX

S— COURT was one of those horribly uncomfortable old places that stand as landmarks to our illustrious and hardy ancestors. One can quite understand poor people envying the occupants of such imposing-looking edifices, but there really isn't anything to envy, for all the palatial part of them is outside. I sometimes think that if the King were to let one of his palaces to the Labour Party on condition that they brought all their families and lived there for one winter there would be less envying of the lot of kings and less misconception about the comfort of palaces.

S— Court was one of the "stately homes of England"; in its young days it had been a

monastery. I won't describe it in detail, for they are always the same; besides most of them are being turned into Hotels now—not that I would ever stay in one of them. It had been built in sixteen something—I never can remember dates—had been several times partially destroyed by fire, and on an equal number (more or less) of occasions partially repaired. There were five wings built round two courtyards, a great central hall with one huge open fireplace—always icy cold, diamond paned windows—always dark, and an organ loft—used to store rubbish. The drawing-room was so cold that it could only be used in summer, the dining-room ditto and reserved for dinner parties, so we really lived in three morning-rooms. There was also a billiard-room, forty bedrooms, and one bath-room with a horrible stone tank—never used. The servants' quarters were similarly huge and uncomfortable. About twenty yards to one side was the church, of which George was patron, and behind that the graveyard—most insanitary I thought. In front of the house, which was a most imposing pile, was a deer park—quite the nicest part of it all.

Naturally the house was haunted; such places always are. There were three ghosts at S—— Court. Number one was the Green Man, who walked down the staircase at midnight whenever a Sir Something L—— was about to die. Number two was the Weeping Lady, dressed all in black and very beautiful, who appeared on the other staircase—also at midnight—when the Lady Some-

thing L——, then existing, was getting ready to expire. Number three was the Wicked Sir Lionel L—— who stamped about—at *midnight*—in *top boots* and slashed *furiously* on the door of the haunted room with a *hunting crop*; he had beaten his wife to death, so the story went; horrid wretch!

George was rather proud of his ghosts, just as he was proud of everything else that he thought belonged to him—including myself. Poor fellow! he couldn't really help it, for pride was one of the chief assets of the family as it had been the greater part of his education. For years he did his level best to instil some of his pride into me, and I did try hard to absorb some of the spirit of Tradition—just to please George; but somehow I have always preferred people (young men mostly) to ancient ruins. Then again I am not fond of musty, gloomy, old things. I never have been able to venerate an old frock, like some old-fashioned women do. I like new things, young things, things that are bright and warm and cheerful, things that are really alive. I love Life and people and the world, which is God's garden I think. As for the old moss covered, moth infested, wormy things they always seem to me to be dead and sadly in need of burial. Perhaps when I am old—properly old—I shall feel differently on this point; somehow I doubt it.

Now I don't like ghosts, not that I am afraid of them, for I have never seen one—although I am so psychic and very interested in Spiritualism. For that matter I have never even seen a spirit,

that is an embodied spirit; and I very much doubt whether we ever shall see them with our eyes. I don't think spirits were meant to be seen; and why on earth should they bother about us poor creatures down here when there must be hundreds and thousands of other interesting spirits to talk to up there? I am quite sure that when I am a spirit I shan't trouble about this old world.

George swore that the haunted room was haunted; that his great aunt had been terrified almost into hysterics there; and he made a great deal of fuss about reopening it. However he gave in eventually. I wanted to have some fun with that room, so I furnished it very nicely, invited my sister Gwen to stay for a week, and dared her to sleep in the room.

Gwen always liked to pose as a very courageous woman, quite the soldier's daughter, so of course she wouldn't have any other room. For several nights everything went off all right; and Gwen was in danger of becoming a great heroine. Then early one morning she dashed into my room, hair flying, and in her nightgown. She looked horribly frightened.

"He's come," she panted.

"Who?" I asked, as I made room for her beside me.

"That old monster, Sir Lionel."

"Gwen!"

"Well someone came and tramped along the corridor *in top boots* and slashed *furiously* three times on the door, with a *hunting crop*."

"Gwen!"

"It is true," she shivered.

"Did you *see* him?"

"I didn't see him, exactly, but I felt him."

"How felt him?"

"Well, it was all cold and clammy and there was a horrid musty smell in the corridor."

"There always is," I said. Then I made a sudden determination: "Gwen, I'll sleep there to-morrow night."

"Oh! don't, my dear, it's awful!"

"And you sleep here. Not a word to anyone, mind."

X

THE next night after everyone was in bed I and Gwen changed rooms. I was awfully keen to find out about the ghost, and besides I had something up my sleeve.

Perhaps I ought to mention here that George had not done what I suggested in the way of sleeping arrangements; he was too frightened of his mother. While my rooms were at the end of *one* wing, his were at the end of *another*; the haunted room was the corner of the two. Anyone wanting to come from his wing to mine would

have to pass the door of the haunted room. No one, to my knowledge, had ever wanted to.

As I didn't want to wake people up—George's mother had her rooms next to mine—I took off my shoes and tiptoed along in bare feet.

Everything was very comfortable in the haunted room and I bolted the door and got into bed—not to sleep for I wanted to be on the *qui vive* and not muzzy with sleep. I forgot to mention that I had brought my revolver with me—one that poor dear Edward had given me.

Now an old house is never quiet. Old chairs and old tables and old wardrobes all creak; old boards groan and rattle; rats and mice scamper about; creepers tap on the window panes; and some wind or other always seems to whistle somewhere.

For a long time I lay and listened to these sounds, and I must say it was as much as I could do to keep awake. And then I did hear something. It sounded like something rattling—"Chains!" came into my mind. I clutched my revolver. Then came a bang—followed by more rattling. Then quite distinctly I heard footsteps, heavy footsteps, coming down the corridor—*top boots!*

If I hadn't been brave I am sure that I should have shrieked—after all that George had told me, and Gwen's recent experiences. But I didn't. On the contrary I crept out of bed, put on my dressing-gown and went to the door. Along came the tramp, tramp, tramp—just like a man in top

boots. Then a crack! crack! crack!—just like a *hunting crop*—came from outside the door. I cocked the revolver and peeped through the key-hole. I could see nothing—it was only afterwards that I discovered that the key was in the lock, outside. The tramping died away in the distance.

Now was my time! I opened the door—very quietly. Nothing! I tiptoed down the corridor; all was inky blackness. I passed George's mother's room and to my surprise a light was shining under the door—old doors in old houses seldom fit properly. I had half a notion to tell her about the ghost, but I thought better of it; she would certainly be frightened and would probably make a scene. Ghosts don't like scenes. So I crept on. Not a sound! But something told me that someone was there. I couldn't see anyone, naturally, and yet I felt sure that there was something—at the end of the corridor—and close to the door of my bedroom. I wondered if Gwen had heard anything.

On I crept. Then suddenly a sound—a sort of scratching noise. My revolver very nearly went off. The door, my door, flew open. And there was Gwen, poker in one hand and lamp in the other. And—oh! horror! George in his dressing gown . . . and carpet slippers—kissing . . . one of my shoes. I suppose I must have left them in the corridor.

I must say that George looked far less of a fool than most men would have done under similar

circumstances, and retired almost unruffled to his own wing. He looked rather pathetic when I explained things to him next morning.

XI

AFTER the haunted room episode George took quite a dislike to Gwen—rather silly of him considering it was his own fault. However she had only come for a week, and was expected home, so that was all right. George tried to take advantage of the occurrence by reopening the sleeping arrangement controversy, but, as I pointed out, nothing could be done while his mother was in the house—and to make matters worse next door to me. George didn't say much, but I could see that he was thinking a lot—he always looked supernaturally solemn when he exercised his brains. Then the house party arrived, thirty strong and mostly men; and I really hadn't time to waste on George or his conscience. One thing about George was that he wasn't in the least jealous. Stodgy people seldom are.

The one salvation to life in a big country house is the house party. If one lives in a sort of cross between a monastery and an hotel one must have company, crowds of company. It takes a very

good monk to live on a hill top all by himself, and a really first class philosopher to live all alone in a tub. Being a woman, I am neither. I believe that George would have been quite satisfied to live in solitary glory with the servants, his mother, and myself to look after him. Men are such simple creatures, and I honestly believe if left to themselves they would all go "back to the land." Give the average man plenty of food, a gun, and things to shoot and he is as happy as the shooting season lasts. Women, however Amazonian, soon get tired of killing things. They were born creators not killers. and I don't believe that any woman really likes to kill for killing's sake; she may—probably does—persuade men to kill things for *her* sake. Thinking things over, I must say that there is far too much killing in the world to please me. I can't see why we human creatures are so fond of killing. Somehow I can't believe that killing was part of God's Great Plan for us. It may be right for people like clergymen to talk about blood and sacrifice, but certainly none of our really great men, our poets, and philosophers, or our Christ ever preached that sort of thing. When one has produced a son and had him butchered by other women's sons, somehow one doesn't hate the *other women* or *their sons*, but the *system* that made this slaughter possible. I know that heaps of people say that it is patriotic to have one's son killed. I used to feel that way myself before I had sons old enough to be killed; tradition I suppose. But I don't believe that there

is one mother in all the world who has lost a son, killed, who isn't disgusted with this wholesale butchery under the name of Patriotism. The very word is nauseating to me now! And, mark well what I say, sisters, it is us, the women of the world, the mothers of the world, who alone can stop this horrid thing. Leagues of Nations won't do it, statesmen, politicians, Governments won't do it. Women will. And I can see—I am awfully psychic as I said—the time coming when women will make laws for men to administer. For while we are makers—essentially, we must admit that we can't administrate.

A woman, every woman who is educated, can mould some man to her desire. A married woman can make her husband anything that she wants. A mother can make her sons to her own pattern. A sister can influence a brother to her purpose. If we want good men, honest men, splendid men, we must show our men that *that* is what we want, what we expect, and what we will have from them. We, as women, hold the key to our menfolk; in our hands we hold the tuning-fork of Humanity: *the heart*. We may not be able to control the minds of our men, but we can and must attune their hearts to Harmony. And Harmony is such a simple thing, simple as all eternal things are: merely Love and Duty.

When I married him, George was a perfect monster for killing. It was his hobby. Day after day, from morning to night he would go out to destroy. It was not the killing—I have killed

things myself, and I am considered rather a good shot—but the orgy of killing that disgusted me. I know a lot of men, keen sportsmen before the war, who have come back after four or five years of battle and murder and sudden death and who have told me—very confidentially—that they will never kill another thing as long as they live. I can quite understand and admire their point of view. I changed George long before the war. It was hard work. But work will tell. Instead of complimenting him on his bag of birds, I would turn up my nose—it turns up quite a lot naturally, and refuse to eat them. After a time he put down less game—prices helped a lot—and so there was less to kill. Before he died he had given up breeding altogether.

When he wasn't shooting things, George spent his time chasing them. I used to hunt quite a lot—I look rather nice in the saddle (side, of course; women riding astride look so horribly masculine!). In those days, I didn't think, I just looked pretty and did what suited me. I must say that I don't know anything more delightful than a good gallop across country. It was being "blooded" that cured me. Everything was such fun, the men in their scarlet coats, the horses, the hounds, the fences: all but the fox.

We English are supposed to be sportsmen, but are we? We condemn cock-fighting (I have seen some lovely cock-fighting in Spain, and how the cocks love it!) because we say it isn't sport. We hold up our hands in horror at the mere mention of bull fights. And yet we chase and kill foxes and

hares and deer, and call it Sport. To me "sport" means equal chances for all concerned, and equal risks. In a cock fight, both cocks are equal. In a bull fight, bulls or men may be killed. Indeed, a famous matador once told me that almost every bull fighter is eventually killed. "But the poor horses?" I said. "Señora, no man living, not even I, is brave enough to fight a bull unless he is a little tired. So we have horses, old horses, who are ready to die."

I heard afterwards that the poor fellow—and he was so handsome in his matador's dress!—was gored to death in a great *corrida* in Madrid. So perhaps he was right about the bull and man being equal. But the horses!—no there is no sport for them in bull fighting.

Now boxing is sport—I always go to the National Sporting Club on Ladies' Night; so is football; and cricket; and racing—I love racing. But fox hunting and deer chasing is a relic of barbarism—quite as bad as bull fighting—which we women must put out of court for our men. George gave up hunting—all but two days a week—to please me, and bought what he had vowed he never would buy, a motor car.

George was a convert worthy of any woman's mettle; he fought so hard against being converted.

XII

GEORGE had a great sense of Duty—mostly to himself. It caused most of the friction between us. Duty is the essence of life, everyone knows that. Unfortunately so many of us imagine that it means our neighbour's duty to us—it is a weakness of my own, so I know. George's sense of duty was conceived in Tradition and fostered by Education. Tradition told George that he was a born ruler of men, and Education had fitted him to rule. He had an idea that the same thing applied to women—and to me. He was wrong.

Now Tradition and Education had hoped to make me believe that women were born to obedience. Luckily for me something inside me said: "stuff and nonsense." I always obeyed my husbands in really *big* things; but it is the little things that make life.

George considered that it was his Duty to give his mother a home.

"You see, my dear," (I had broken him of calling me "Jewel") he said, when I took him to task on the subject—she really was too awful the way she tried to run everything—"the old lady has lived here so long that she has got to—er—consider this her home."

"I quite believe you," I said.

" I don't think it would be right to turn her out into the street."

" Why not let her have that house in Ireland, or the cottage in Cornwall? " I suggested.

" Well—er—the trouble is that she—er——"

" That you are terrified of her, George."

" I'm not! "

" What are you then? "

" I'm—er—sorry for her," said George.

" And what about poor little me? "

" I can't see what you've got to grumble at. She takes a great deal of the work off your hands."

" All, George."

" Well? "

" And I love work. I must work or I'll burst."

" I thought you and the old lady were getting on rather nicely," sighed George.

" Appearances often belie facts," I said.

" Don't you like her? She's not half a bad old sort, I think."

" I should love her—in Ireland, or Cornwall."

" Oh! you women! You're the cause of all the worry in the world. What the deuce does it matter who does the housekeeping——? "

" And manages the servants, and orders the carriage, and pours out tea, and sits at the head of the table, and invites people to dinner, and——"

" Great Scot! you don't mean to say that those silly trifles upset you? "

" Not in the least! But they will upset your mother—most dreadfully—when I do them. And I'm going to begin at once."

" Oh Lord ! " groaned George. He must have known quite a lot about his mother.

" So to save a fuss, George dear, I think you had better tell her—this afternoon."

" Can't," said George. " I'm going——"

" I should put it off if I were you," I said very quietly. " She's *your* mother."

" What are you going to do—now ? " asked George in an anxious voice.

" Wait and see," said I (this was long before Mr A—— declaimed his war policy).

I really had come to the end of my patience. One was never meant to be a nonentity in one's own home. Of course it was George's business to manage his own mother; but he couldn't, or wouldn't. In many ways George was an awful coward morally. He was always nice to people, because it was easier to be nice. Yes came far more readily to his tongue than no. As for opinions of his own, he had none. I honestly believe that the first time that he ever used his own brain was when he proposed to me—and then I had to help him. He was a typical Englishman of the old school, Conservative born, Church of England christened, and reared in Tradition. And any man who is these things to-day has never used his brains. He always did things because they were the right thing to do, not because they seemed right to him. He knelt down by his bedside to say his prayers, night and morning—I found that out afterwards—because he had been taught to do so. He went to church on Sundays, because it was

his duty. He shot, rode, gave money—a little—to Charity, made a speech at Christmas in the servants' hall, sang one song at the annual village smoking concert—always the same, danced one dance with the vicar's wife at the annual village dance, rode round the estate once a month with the agent, smoked, drank, played billiards, read, ate, and slept, all because his father and grandfather had done the same thing before him. "Manners maketh man," was his stock phrase. He was an old Etonian.

"What about Doctor Johnson?" I asked him once.

"An awful bounder, my dear."

"Don't you admire brains?"

"Depends upon the feller who owns them."

Such was George when I took him in hand.

For several nights I racked my brains over the problem of how to get George's mother over to Ireland. She it was who did all George's thinking, and I knew that so long as she lived with us there would be no improvement in George. If I hadn't seen possibilities in George I never would have married him. I had taken him for better or for worse, and it was going to be for *better* if I could manage it. Under existing conditions things must have gone from bad to the worst worst. Every day I and George were getting farther apart. I lived in his house, ate at his table, rode his horses, drove in his dog-cart, and wore his wedding ring—over my other two (three wedding rings look awfully imposing). Otherwise we might have been

strangers. We seldom spoke to each other for more than a minute, and hardly ever alone. We had acquired the "pecking" habit of salutation—fatal to wedded bliss. Altogether we were on the high road to ruin, and George's mother was responsible. She must go; or—another contingency—I would go.

George's mother was one of the most obstinate old women I have ever met, far worse than George, or myself. If ever I asked her something directly, she would reply: "My *dear* child, I will see if it can be managed. It is rather unusual you know." And it never could be managed. I remember having to telephone for a cab from the livery stables one Sunday afternoon because: "my *dear* child, we *never* expect the men to go out on the Sabbath."

"The dog-cart will do," said I.

"My *dear* child, we *never* ask the men to work on the Sabbath."

"I can harness up; and Jim Crow is quite quiet with me."

"My *dear* child, our horses *never* go out on the Sabbath."

I might have been an eighteen year old girl, certainly not a thrice-married woman with four children.

No; there was no way out of it. George's mother must go.

Unfortunately George's mother had no intention of going.

At first I tried open diplomacy. One night I

went into her room, explained matters, even cried a little; all to no purpose. She thought that I was weak, and immediately became more overbearing.

" Ridiculous, my *dear* child; *who* would manage the servants and look after George if *I* went to Ireland—horrid damp place! "

" *I* would," I said, " and West." West was George's valet.

" My *dear* child, you are *far* too delicate, and " —smiling grimly like a steel trap—" presently you will have other duties to demand your attention."

" Such as? "

" Your *Duty* to your husband. George, dear boy, has confided his hopes to me. My *dear* child, surely you must realise that George *must* have a son and heir? "

I looked shocked, and blushed a little.

" It is your *Duty* to my son," she repeated sternly.

Horrid old thing! with her duty, duty, duty. As if one were a machine. Then the thought came. I clapped my hands.

" A bargain, mama! If you go to Ireland, George has his son."

She looked shocked; but was too old to blush.

" Otherwise I go."

" My *dear* child, you are losing your reason; *where* will you go? "

" To the Devil," said I.

XIII

I WENT. George, from sheer terror of what I was going to do to his name, went too. We were away for a whole year; and what a year! Really, I enjoyed myself hugely. We opened George's London house for the season and I filled it with my servants and my friends. I carted him off to the Riviera, to Monte Carlo, everywhere that it was fashionable to go. I flirted outrageously, gambled horribly, lost pots of money at the races, ran up huge bills for clothes and hats and trinkets—all of which I put down to George, bought a really expensive motor, and altogether behaved abomin—á la mode. As for George, I led him about on a dog chain, he and his cheque book.

People began to pity George. So did I really, poor fellow. But mules must be driven. For a whole year he was my banker, and that was all. Whenever he tried to make love to me or kiss me—and I used every art of which I was capable to make him try—I would tell him to go and make love to his mother. Sometimes he would look so abjectly miserable and implore me so pitifully to come back home with him, that a fluttering would come to my heart-strings. But one thought of his mother, and my brain would harden into iron.

George was utterly and absolutely miserable. By nature and circumstances a lazy man, I ran him almost to death. Several times during the year he tried to use his authority: rather hopeless. Several times he made frantic efforts to break his chain; and I would do something rather more outrageous than usual. Time and again he threatened to leave me; I countered with threats of—oh! anything that happened to come handy to my tongue. A slave to the tradition of a name, he would have gone through fire and water for that name; and it happened to be mine too.

S—— Court, which was the proudest of George's possessions and certainly dearest to his heart, gradually reverted to a sort of nunnery, with his mother as the Mother Superior. The shooting went *fat*, and no one hunted, because there were no house parties. Appealing letters came from the Agent, the Vicar, the Bailiff, Brooks—the butler, and Smithers—the cook; and two of the grooms and the head gardener threatened to leave. They all hated George's mother, unadulterated for a long time; and they all liked me.

George began to hate his mother. Not that he told me so, but he used to pull his moustache terribly when he read her letters.

George was dying to get home; and, as a matter of fact, I was getting rather tired out myself. One can't keep up the pace indefinitely, and really and truly I hate *having* to do things. I am not fast by nature; and again continuous late nights are wicked for one's looks. However I knew better

than to slacken speed until the winning post was passed; and it was getting very near.

At the end of two furious weeks, George informed me one evening—he had begged for a couple of minutes' private conversation—that he had written to his mother.

"Oh," said I, "how enthralling!"

"Not an ordinary letter," said George.

"Really? How interesting!"

"I don't know whether I ought to have done it, but I told her to go away."

"Where to? Poor old thing!"

"Well—er—knowing your wishes, my dear, I—er—suggested Ireland. She will probably decide to take the house in Cornwall."

"Don't you think we ought to let her stay where she is, George *dear*? You see she has lived there *so* long now and has got *so* used to the place. Besides we're having *such* fun as we are."

George gasped, like a fish out of water.

XIV

GEORGE'S mother did go. It must have been an awful letter. That is always the curious thing about a worm, when it does turn the effect is startling, and one imagines that it's going to *bite*. At last I and George entered into that often written

and less often accomplished state of life called a happy marriage.

George by himself was an old dear ; I had known it all along, from that very first night in Biarritz. I am quite sure that he would have been miserable with any other woman. When the road was properly clear we went home, and really it was lovely the fuss everyone made about me. Brooks—the butler (I have mentioned him before, I think) nearly bowed himself in two as he welcomed us, and Smithers, dear old fat Smithers, had two large tears in her eyes as she showed me the fatted calf. I am sure they were all very grateful for what I had done for them (sounds rather like Christian Science. I have always remained a little faithful to it).

We rearranged the house from top to toe, put in twelve bath-rooms, central heating and electric light. Also my boudoir became George's dressing-room ; I never can see the necessity of a boudoir upstairs. Then again I arranged the house parties.

Life in the country can be simply scrumptuous if one knows how to arrange it. The thing is to have clever, interesting people to stay with one. George's mother always chose her guests for their importance, social standing, or money. I selected mine for amusement. For years and years, ever since I was a girl, I had vowed that if ever I could afford it I would be a sort of fairy queen (not god-mother, far too old !) to struggling authors and actors and artists, in fact to all those intelligent

people to whom good food and fresh air and nice surroundings would appeal. Then again, being clever myself, I must have clever people round me. I can forgive clever people anything. I remember once a young actor who tried to make love to me—George was too sleepy to see, he had been out hunting all day. He was quite a boy, very brilliant, and somehow he reminded me a little of Roger. Really he made love quite nicely, “à la Lewis Waller.” He was horribly surprised when I kissed him on his curls and told him not to be a silly boy. But he took it very nicely, and we are still great friends. He is famous now, married, and has two children. He says that he learnt to be happy from me. And we were happy, George and I; most kind Christians said: “too happy to last.”

In my heart of hearts I am getting rather tired of Christianity—that is Christianity as practised nowadays. There is far too much sorrow and tears and vale of suffering and sin about it to please me, and I have sampled a good many Christian Creeds—not quite all, for there are four hundred so I’ve been told. The only happy Christians I have met have been Christian Scientists; and somehow I am quite sure that unless Religion makes people happy *now*, then Religion must be all wrong. People were meant to be happy. Would God have been likely to make a beautiful garden like this world for people to be miserable in? If He had wanted to make us wretched, or to punish us for something, or to purge us of something, He

would have sent us to hell or the moon according to our temperaments.

I have a Religion, but it has no name. The moment one gives a thing a name one makes it small, and the name itself separates it from other things. (Reading it over, that last sentence sounds rather silly, but words are so futile to express spiritual things.) Mine is a religion of happiness, or if you want to put it scientifically, of Harmony. Not the: "eat, drink, and be merry" religion of Omar Khayyam, nor the: "Our Father up in the clouds" religion called Christianity. Merely this:

The world is a jolly old garden, old and yet always new, a beautiful place to play in and a beautiful place to work in, and in it all the work should be play. It is inhabited by all sorts of jolly people, who become nicer the more one knows them, and all of whom are capable of wonderful things and horrid things. If one is nice to them they are seldom nasty in return; if one is nasty, they are quite likely—and one can't blame them—to become nasty. *Moral: be nice to people.* Then there are all the animals, always beautiful and charming if one is nice to them. I know a man who used to keep pet tigers in his house, big tigers, and they loved him. *Moral: be nice to animals.* Then we come to the motive force behind all these things, the force that moves the wind, that makes the flowers grow, the birds sing, that moves everything and us; Life if you like. That is my God. I know now that He was poor

dear Edward's God, Christ's God, and Browning's, and Keats', and Rupert Brooke's—brave boy! And He is a wonderful God. Always beautiful and always close to one. And I have come to depend upon Him so. When little John smiled—he had a beautiful smile—it was God smiling through him I think.

And He is my God, mine, mine, my very own! and yours and everyone else's who want Him. And He is always whispering to us to be happy. He it is that sings behind the lark. He it is that makes the village yokel whistle as he goes to work. There are some people I know who dislike whistling, or singing, or music in any shape or form. Poor things! I always pity them, for they must be so unhappy. Such people seldom smile; even smiling seems to hurt them. Very often such people are deeply religious, in the sense that they polish up the church brasses, make slippers for the Vicar, in fact spend most of their time in the shadow of the church. Personally I think shadows unhealthy; I much prefer the sunshine. One can't wonder that these people—and most of them I am sorry to say are women, unmarried women—pin all their faith in the Future; but how they misuse the poor Present.

I think that I must have been made in the Present Tense. All my life I have lived for the Present, and I must say that I *have* enjoyed it and myself tremendously. My God is a Present God, and I don't have to wait until I am dead to see Him. I may be wrong, heaps of people tell me that I am;

but no one has ever accused me of being miserable. Anyhow I am not afraid of meeting Him; one can't *fear* what one *loves*. If only people would love God instead of fearing Him, what a wonderful difference there would be in the world. We all say: "Our Father," though very few of us consider Him as a Father, or as Ours. We all say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"—at all events on Sundays; and we look most mournful and solemn as we are saying it. If God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, and earth is a miserable place, surely Heaven must be equally miserable? One can't like Discord and worship Harmony all in the same breath; it isn't natural or reasonable. And I am sure God is not unnatural or unreasonable. My own belief is that God is the Spirit of Harmony, and that Harmony is His Plan for us all. We are here in the world to learn His Harmony, so that one day we may be proficient enough to join His Heavenly Orchestra.

To learn Harmony we must eliminate Discord; and to learn *anything* we must pay attention to our lessons, which means living in the Present. I think that's logical, although, being a woman, I'm not supposed to understand Logic.

God's lessons to us are all *object* lessons. He plants us in a beautiful garden, gives us everything necessary to us and says: "This is all Beautiful, and being Beautiful it is all Good. I am Good because I made all this Beauty. I am with you always, everywhere. I am Harmony. I am Happiness. You can't *see* Me, because I am Spirit

or Essence—something too subtle for your eyes. But My works you can see, for I have made them visible to you in Matter, and by My works you can know Me. Test Me and try Me for yourselves—each one individually, for I am the Father of each one of you. If you look for Me—here, now, in this world—you will find Me. If you find Me, you will love Me. That is Justice; and I am the Spirit of Justice. I am your Father; that part of you which you call Mind is Me. Nature is your mother; she is that part of you which you call your Body. Nature is My creation, Beautiful. I love you; and out of the greatness of that Love give you Liberty, Liberty to do what you like. Some may think it a dangerous gift—most rulers of men would, that by giving it to you I might lose you and your love. You may wander, miss My Purpose, be led astray by other gods of your own making, but one day you will return to Me. Having tried and tested all, and having found all wanting; then, whole-hearted, whole-minded, you will return to Me; and *all your love* will be for Me. I am long suffering and of great kindness.”

This is what God, my God, whispers to me.

XV

WHEN I confided to George that he might expect a son soon, he was awfully pleased; and the fuss he made about me was wonderful. Everything was to be exactly as I wanted; for he had great faith in my judgment, which was sensible of him.

Now a son was my free gift to George—I knew it was going to be a son, and I gave it with a cheerful countenance, but deep down in the pit of my tummy was an awful feeling of fear. I had suffered so horribly with Sheila. However I kept up my spirits, which is half the battle, and thought about myself as little as possible. When one is ill or afraid, which is a form of illness, it is terribly difficult not to think about oneself; and thinking about oneself causes all the mischief in the world, and certainly makes one feel worse and more afraid. A vicious circle, just like Prices and Wages to-day. Any number of brilliant people have been trying to solve the vicious circle of wages and prices, and most of them have come to the conclusion that the only remedy is Production. There is only one means of stopping a revolving circle and that is by suspending motion. Production only gives it added impetus. When motion is suspended people sit down—and think. Thought or mischief—sometimes both—is the natural sequence of men at

rest. When those same men must work to live, then they are forced into the condition called "ca' canny." If I were a working man I certainly should not be bamboozled into producing more profits for the profiteers. I should ca' canny as cheerfully as possible and think things out for myself. I shouldn't believe what the Trades' Union leaders told me, neither should I believe the Government, nor anyone. I should say to myself: "Bill Jones, you mayn't have much of a head-piece, but such as it is it's yourn and nobody else's, and it was given you to use." And I should use it. That done, I suppose I should become an agitator for the nationalisation of everything.

Nationalisation is a horrible evil I know. Just fancy this Government, or any other Government composed of the same sort of people, having charge of everything! The very thought of it makes one ill. They would make hundreds of new offices every day for their friends, the cost of governing us would go up by leaps and bounds, and taxes would become even more terrific than they are now. That reminds me: isn't it funny that we should have to pay through the nose for the pleasure of being governed?

Poor old England is in a bad way nowadays. She reminds me of Gulliver being pegged out by Pigmies. And yet we fondly imagine that we are the freest people in the world. Someone ought to change that last line of Rule Britannia about Britons never, never, never, etc., to something more appropriate to the times we live in. Thinking

things over the other night I came to the conclusion that there are only two things uncontrolled at present: one is breathing and the other having children. And for all anyone knows we may have air helmets with registers served out to us yet.

Really and truly I believe that I am—for want of a better word—a Bolshevik. I don't know anyone of importance in England who has confessed to being one so far. So I think I am still original. And yet I believe that nine out of ten thinking women are as Bolshevik as I am. Nothing blood and thundery—we aren't as excitable as the Russians, but "Bolshies" economically. I am quite sure every woman loves Liberty, far more than our menfolk do to-day, and I am equally certain that the *spirit*—not the *letter*—of Bolshevism in a placid, sane, free shape is coming to England; and that the women of England will bring it about.

We are sick of wars, we are weary of profiteers and supermen, we are tired of dishonesty, and even the huge dividends that some of us get now—thirty, forty, fifty per cent, when before we were content with three and four—disgust many of us. And we are mad, mad to think that the survivors of those splendid men we sent to fight for us are out of work and being palmed off with miserable pittance for pensions. Women are essentially just; and it is the crying injustice of it all that drives us to seek a remedy.

And what is the source of all this injustice, my

sisters? For to remedy the evil we must discover the germ that causes it.

Great men have told us. Tolstoy proclaimed it in Russia. Mr Eddison is voicing it in America. I, a mere woman, a little woman at that, will tell you. It is Commercialism. We, the great free people of England, have become—all unknown to us—converts to the great god of the Americans, who in their turn were converted by the Jews: the Almighty Dollar. We are rapidly becoming a nation of sharks; and our flag should be, not a Union Jack, but three golden balls on a black background (a favourite colour scheme of mine).

Commercialism is the system which set up the Golden Calf in our midst, Civilisation the Law that makes us—willy nilly—fall down and worship, and Christianity (the sadly misapplied teachings of Christ) is the salve we use to calm our conscience—a sort of *spiritual cocaine*. I think most sensible people are getting rather sick of Drugs.

While Tolstoy condemns Commercialism as the curse of the world, Eddison says that Civilisation is becoming too complicated. While Tolstoy was the father of the Russian revolution, Eddison evolves a scheme to oust the Almighty Dollar and substitute for it the ancient system of barter.

The trouble is that the working people of all nations have been forced into the chains of Commercialism to produce, produce, produce goods and more goods. Those goods are not for their own consumption nor for home consumption, but to send to other countries. While we buy American

shoes, Americans buy our shoes. Spanish iron comes here, our iron goes somewhere else, and so on; and it is always the best of everything that goes to the other people. Hence one of the most paying things to put your money into to-day is a *Shipping Company*. Meanwhile the people who handle these things—in invoices or over the 'phone—wax rich and become millionaires, Members of Parliament, and Noble Lords. I know because I have had to move among them—rather unpleasant!

There is heaps of everything in the world for everyone. We were not placed on a desert island by some awful Deity to starve. The trouble is that almost everything is in the hands of a few people—astute financiers we call them—who have formed themselves into Trusts. These Trusts belie their name; there is no trust about them. The object of these combines or monopolies is said to be to cheapen production, in reality it is to control the output, so that there shall not be too much of any one commodity on the market at the same time, and so that the price shall be maintained. From Petrol to Diamonds, from Soap to Bismuth, all these good things which Nature has given us, are kept from us by the Trusts—by us I mean the people who are poor. I suppose by right I am not in that class, but I am at heart.

Now the earth, the sea, and all therein belongs to all of us collectively, just as much as the air we breathe. These things are ours, and there is ample for everyone. Trusts innumerable, backed by

Governments controlled by these Trusts, are keeping us from our possessions. What do they care whether poor people starve or die, so long as prices leave them a fat profit? Our learned judges punish a boy for stealing an apple, while they are proud to call a man friend who has picked people's pockets to the tune of millions. If I were a judge I should feel very sorry for some of the people, fat people with long handles to their names, who are on my visiting list to-day.

The remedy for the world is first a Religion of Happiness and Justice, then Government by Honest people for Free people. Nationalisation of everything, with experts—*not lawyers*—running the various industries; gaol for all members of Trusts, with terms varying according to the amount of money stolen; and a system of barter between nations. Our Government posts a list of all we have to sell and another of what we wish to buy. Other Governments do likewise. Each only sells its surplus. Our working people produce goods—first for us, then for other countries. All work for the Community, serve the Community. No Government should sweat its people in order to compete with outsiders; its first duty should be to see to the comfort of its work people, its citizens; its second to prevent any one citizen or combination of citizens getting too uppish; and its last and greatest duty to protect its weaker citizens. The greatness of a country should be judged by the care it takes of its blind and halt and maimed citizens, not by the number of its millionaires. In

other words a country's reputation and glory should lie—not in the number of its palaces—but in the absence of poor houses.

And the only Government that is likely to do that is one composed of people—men and women—who have no shares in any of the big Trusts.

If only shareholders would band themselves together into a "Non-Usury Union," and dismiss any director who dared to give them more than four per cent for their money, and decapitate any chairman who authorised the "watering" of their stocks and shares. That would help. Unfortunately so many of us like to get a big percentage on our money, and fail to see that by doing so we are acting as accomplices to a crime. Really and truly we are every bit as bad as an ordinary burglar—if not worse. I am afraid that scheme wouldn't work. I for one would vote for the Labour Party if only they had not been such awful Pacifists. I can't stand Pacifists in war-time. Then again they have been behaving so abominably to the ex-service men, refusing them work and not allowing them to join the Unions. They ought to be proud to have such splendid fellows working next to them, and if they only realised it they would benefit by rubbing elbows with such men. If only the Labour Party would—but it's quite useless; and there is nothing for it but Communism. I am a—goodness knows what I am! Lenin and Trotsky sound such brutes.

XVI

I AM afraid that I got rather put off in my last chapter. That is the worst of being a woman. I see I started with George and finished a sort of Bolshevik. How horrified George would have been, poor dear!

By a curious coincidence—something always comes to help me in times of difficulty, God I call It—a few months before George II.—he was to be George after his father—was due to make his bow upon this stage of the world I read a book about “Twilight Sleep.” It is all right men laughing; they don’t have to have babies, otherwise they would change their tune.

I determined to have twilight sleep. I told George, and he approved quite nicely. After a long search I found a doctor who approved, and he happened to be a woman. Now I am not very keen on women, as I think I mentioned, and a woman doctor sounded positively dangerous. However I would have twilight sleep, and as I couldn’t find a man doctor to do it, I went to the Doctress. She—I can’t mention her name, for she is still going strong—was all that a lady doctor should be: not too young, unmarried, thin, serious, and strong. Anyone could see that her heart was in her work,

sensible woman! Her one and only *affaire-de-cœur* had gone all wrong, poor thing! She was most pleasant and sympathetic, told me all about twilight sleep, showed me five twilight sleep babies—all the bonniest little things, and arranged to take me in her Home (not hers, because doctors are not supposed to run Nursing Homes; but they do).

George decided that it was an excellent arrangement, and booked a room for himself at the Hotel just round the corner from the Home. He wanted to be near me, he said; awfully unselfish of him, I thought.

In due season—that is two weeks before the event, one doesn't want to cut these things too close—we moved to B——. Everyone was charming—they always are if one has money and a title, and most people are to me at any time; and the sea air did George a lot of good.

Then there came a night—these things usually happen at night—when the matron telephoned to the doctor, and the doctor arrived with the paraphernalia of her trade, chiefly consisting of a hypodermic syringe. She injected the Scopolmine-Morphine mixture, and that is all I can tell you, for I don't remember anything more—clearly. I have a dim recollection of someone holding up something, and asking me what it was, but I was far too sleepy to answer silly questions. Afterwards they told me that it was a piece of soap. They always hold up something, to see if one remembers what it is.

When I woke up it was to find dear old George stroking my forehead. He stopped when I opened my eyes.

"Where am I?" I asked.

"In the Home," said George.

"Oh! botheration!" I suddenly remembered about baby. George must have felt my thought, for he suddenly rang the bell over my head.

"Lady L—— would like to see the baby," he said to the smiling nurse.

"The baby! But George!" I thought he was joking, and yet it wasn't in George to joke, for actually I remembered nothing of any baby. And I didn't feel in the least ill or even uncomfortable.

"He's a fine little fellow," said George, rather humbly I thought—for him.

"That is he," said the nurse, who came in at that moment.

He was really a fine little fellow, not fat, but very firm, with a quantity of fair hair, and he was cooing and laughing, as pleased as Punch to be in the world at last.

"Seven pounds," said nurse.

"Just like you," said George.

"That he is!" said nurse.

And there really was a likeness.

"It's the eyes, me lady," said nurse. "He's got laughing eyes just like your ladyship."

"And he's got that dimple——" began George. Suddenly he remembered himself. "Well, glad you're feeling better, old lady. I must be off now,

rather important, don't you know. Ta-ta, little 'un."

" Won't you kiss me, George? "

George stopped short as if he had been shot, looked at me, glared solemnly at nurse, and opened the door. Nurse stalked out with great dignity and the baby. George shut the door, locked it, then tiptoed over to me.

" You're wonderful," he said, after a little while.

" It's Twilight Sleep," I said.

XVII

AFTER dictating the last chapter yesterday evening—I always do one chapter at a sitting, I began to rack my brains for something amusing to say in my next. Rather difficult! for George had very little sense of the ridiculous, and war had just been declared. I suppose I might make up something funny, but the trouble is that when one invents things about people they are so seldom true to life. It takes real genius, men like Thackeray and Tolstoy and Maeterlinck, to create children from their brains, and England seems rather scarce of genius just now; so we authors have to fall back upon writing about ourselves and our friends. Any

fool can do that, I know. That is why so many people write nowadays I expect.

It was rather amusing when little John came to see us just before he got his commission. Although he was only seventeen when war broke out, he immediately ran away from school and enlisted. I was rather pleased as it showed his spirit; George was horrified. To think that his son-in-law was a ranker! He insisted on applying for a commission for him, and so, much to little John's disgust, he found himself a "blinkin' horficer," as he said. But it was in the full glory of a private's uniform that he came to spend that leave with us at S—— Court.

I think I have mentioned before that little John was rather a Socialist—it is curious how socialistic our public schools are getting these days, isn't it? I suppose the fact that so many *nouveaux riches* are sending their sons makes the other boys socialistically inclined. I know that when I am introduced to one of our new Lords it always makes me want to go and wash my hands first, and then rush off and shake hands with the chimney-sweep or the coal-man.

Little John wired the time of his arrival, and James, the coachman, went to meet him. James was very fond of Mr John, so were all the servants. He was usually "Master John"; they only promoted him when he donned khaki. Curiously enough a Captain G——, a second cousin of George's, two or three times removed, was coming by the same train. Captain G—— was a regular,

very smart and rather conceited as becoming a Captain Sahib in the—well he was a guardsman.

Our station is a tiny one, and as it happened only two people got out; one was Captain G—— who climbed down from a first class carriage, loaded with gun cases and kit bags and things; the other was little John and his haversack, who alighted from a third smoker.

James was on the look out. He rushed at little John, who shook him warmly by the hand, insisted on taking his haversack, and led him off in triumph.

Captain G—— called the station master.

“ Is there—her—a carriage for me from S—— Court? ” he asked.

“ Yessir,” said the station master, always a polite man. In fact he is one of the few railway people who have remained polite after all these strikes. Funny man! he says that “ politeness costs nothing.”

The station master called a porter, helped to load up the truck himself, and then called James. James touched his hat and stood at attention.

“ Are you—her—from S—— Court, my man? ”

“ Yessir.”

“ Then just—her—see that these things—her—are put on the carriage will you.”

“ Yessir.”

Captain G——’s luggage was hoisted on board; Captain G—— was assisted into the carriage; and when he was duly installed little John appeared

at the door, saluted smartly, and proceeded to get in.

Captain G—— was horrified.

“Are you—her—for S—— Court, my man?” he asked, fitting a monocle into his eye.

“Yessir,” said little John.

“Well—her—hadn’t you—her—better sit—ah—on the box.”

“It’s full up with your kit,” said little John. And in he got.

The drive, four miles of it, was passed in stilly silence; with Captain G—— looking out of one window and little John out of the other. Only when the house appeared in view did little John break the silence.

“Decent old place,” he said.

“Do you—her—belong here, my man?”

“My mother lives here,” said little John.

“Oh! indeed. I suppose—her—that she—her—has a devilish good place?”

“I think she likes it,” said little John.

Just then they arrived. I had been watching out of the window, and ran to meet them. Little John and I hugged each other a little. Captain G—— (I didn’t know him then) looked rather uneasy.

“Hany further horders, milady?” asked James.

Captain G—— came forward.

“My mother,” said little John. I didn’t know then why his eyes were twinkling so.

· · · · ·
Poor Captain G——, two weeks later we heard that he had gone, shot through the head by a

sniper. They went quickly at the beginning, quietly, with a laugh for our fears. It is hard for us to laugh now.

XVIII

LITTLE John was always great fun. I think that he must have inherited something from me, although he was so like poor dear Edward. Certainly everyone liked him. Even George was fond of him; and how his dignified sense of propriety must have been shocked by little John's doings!

And little John was always doing things, startlingly unconventional things. I remember once, oh! how I laughed afterwards, when I and George in our carriage of state—liveried footmen, crest, and cockades all complete, found him in our village inn with Andrews, a young groom who also did the duties of valet to him when he came to stay, in the public bar and tucking in to bread and cheese and beer. George, poor dear, looked terribly shaken; Andrews, a nice boy, horribly startled; and even I felt uncomfortable. Not so little John. While we waited for the footman to return from the post office, which was opposite, he came out, followed by the landlord bearing a large tray and glasses.

"Port for you, little mother," he announced, "and a whisky and soda for the pater."

George took the glass, there was nothing else to be done, and eyed it suspiciously; I sipped the port. Parker, the landlord, stood rubbing his hands on his apron. "Ten years in the wood if h't's a day, milady," he beamed ecstatically. "And that there whisky, Sir George——" George gulped it all down as fast as he could. "Excellent!" he pronounced, as he handed back the empty glass. But I don't think he enjoyed it, poor dear.

Poor George! it must be horrible to find oneself living in the wrong generation. George was Victorian, born and bred, and he was Victorian until—well, until he went to France. To him Class Distinction was not an imaginary line, but a stone wall. And he was not the sort of man to break down anything. It is rather sad, I think, to see the remnants of our old aristocracy trying to bolster up their poor old crumbling walls against the encroaching tide of Mass Education, struggling to stem the torrent of New Ideas with their Old Traditions. And they go down fighting, the last of our Victorians, our old English gentlemen, fighting Taxes with Economy, more Taxes with more Economy; always aloof, always alone, always honest. A great generation, conscious of its greatness, dying gloriously. But who knows that the new generation may not be greater yet?

Oh! you poor little creatures who snap and snarl at the dead, who bark at those bigger than

yourselves, why not be content to grow—that is God's Purpose for us all—to go on growing. To be quiet does not necessarily mean to be content. The rose-bud is not content to remain for ever a bud; but it does not wage war against its brother rose because it is full grown; it does not proclaim that all roses must be buds. Rather it is content to go on increasing. To-day a bud, to-morrow bigger, one day a perfect rose full blown; and then a puff of wind and a few petals on the grass. Gone! who knows where? perhaps to God. But it lived to grow, lived to give joy to us and the butterfly and the bee, lived as an example of God's will upon earth; and in its living it was lovely. A sermon; I am sorry. It is so difficult to keep from airing one's opinions in book form.

For the first year of the war I quite agreed with Roger that middle-aged married men were scarcely the stuff of which to make heroes; after middle age one is so apt to be stuffy and even a little stodgy. Then it became obvious to all except our Government that we were in for a long war. Little John wrote that they were always short of men and munitions and that every man capable of wielding a gun would be required to win. George could use a gun quite well, and I told him that he ought to go. George said that he was doing more valuable work in seeing that his tenants grew wheat. More men were needed, everyone and the papers said so; George persuaded every single man of military age on the estate to join up. Still more men were wanted; George took a leading part

recruiting in the County. I said that it did not look decent for a man in civilian clothes to urge other men into khaki. George joined the Air Force, as a Major. He looked quite nice in uniform. George got a job as an Inspector of something connected with flying; goodness knows how he learnt to be an Inspector; he said that any idiot could inspect. He went to London; I went with him. Go out? not if he knew it, said George. He was far too old; he would crock up in a week; besides he was doing far more valuable work inspecting.

"Any idiot can inspect," I said.

"All the idiots are needed in the Army," said George. He didn't mean that.

It wasn't that George was frightened; he was too much of a sportsman. But I am quite sure that he thought it "*infra dig*" to enlist or even to take an ordinary commission in a line regiment. Of course he was over age, I know, and yet I should have gone if I had been a man and his age. But then I come of soldier stock, and George did not.

And then we heard that little John had been killed, and I—well I just made George go. I must say that once he had made up his mind, he did the thing properly. He applied for a transfer into the Infantry, did two months drilling, and went out; and what is more stayed out. He had a lot of fine stuff in him; and before the year was out he got his regiment.

I didn't see much of him, even on his leaves, for I was working at the Victoria Station buffet.

XIX

A CHANGE came to George. He was still old-fashioned, still separated from his fellows by his old wall of Tradition, but he had begun to look over the wall.

"Do you know, old lady," he wrote in one of his weekly letters—I have it now—"things look different out here. Men one used to think a lot of prove to be 'wash outs'—that's slang, but expressive; while fellows—ordinary sort of chaps, sons of nobodies, turn up trumps. One of my subalterns, son of old J—the ironmonger in T——, you probably may have noticed the man, he used to wear a pink shirt with a green tie, an awful cad I used to think him, well he's splendid. One would have thought from the way he handles men that he had been born to it; and the fellow is absolutely fearless; I have just sent in his name for the M.C.

"Then there is another fellow, a Canadian with an accent that you could cut with a knife. I have just passed him for promotion. He has got the cheek of the Old Gentleman himself, only says Sir by accident, and respects no one. He was holding forth one night in the Mess on the subject of Titles,

when I walked in. He apologised in front of everyone; no gentleman could have done more. But some of them, Great Scot! they make one's hair stand on end."

How George stood trench life the way he did is quite beyond me, for he was quite old really; I suppose his hunting and shooting had kept him fit. He was in all sorts of battles, went over "the top" goodness knows how many times, was all through the Somme, and never a scratch. West, his valet, who had gone out as his batman, and to whom I had given strict instructions, used to write that "the master wore a charmed life." Poor West! he went too.

I began to feel very proud of George; and he did look nice in uniform with a string of medal ribbons. They gave him the D.S.O. twice over and the Croix de Guerre and the—I have got them all somewhere safe for George II., when he grows up; they don't interest me much. And then he got blown up and buried by a mine and came home. The curious thing about it was that he didn't look badly hurt; in fact one couldn't *see* anything; and he was never in hospital at all. But he was peculiar, most peculiar. The first thing he did was to order me to leave my work.

Now I hate being ordered, as I believe I've mentioned, and George had never tried to order me about in his life. I refused. George came all the way up from S—— Court and presented himself at my buffet.

"Tea or coffee?" I asked.

"We're going home by the five-fifty," said George.

"Oh, are we?" I said, and turned to serve a K.O.S.B. boy.

"We are," said George.

And the extraordinary part about it was that we did go. Why I went I don't know to this day. I think that it was something in George's eye that frightened me.

I was reading a story some time ago about a man whose body had been entered by the soul of a German, and really and truly I do believe that some beastly German must have got into George's. The old George was devoted to me; this George hated me—one could see it in every action. It was awful! The old George was stolid and mild and rather stodgy; this George was worse than Roger, my second husband, at his worst. At least Roger had been openly off his head; George was slinkily and slimily and cunningly mad. One could see him watching one furtively, one could feel the beastly things that he thought about one. Then again he was moody, which he had never been before. For days at a time he would speak to no one; either wander about by himself when it was fine or shut himself up in his study. At times he drank, drank himself into a stupor. For close on a year no one crossed our threshold; not only did he refuse to see people, but he actually refused to allow me to see anyone. And he was always suggesting nasty things about women, and reading extracts from the papers about wretched women

who had gone wrong while their husbands were abroad. I think newspapers should be prevented from printing these horrors.

At first I was furious; and then I began to get more and more frightened. With a great deal of difficulty I got a specialist to see him. He said it was "shell shock," and explained that George was like a machine that had run itself down, that his nerves were all unstrung and that he needed rest.

God knows I did my best. Whenever I felt like running out of the house and leaving him for good, I always tried to remember what the doctor had said, and I kept saying to myself that it was the price of Victory, that many men were in a worse condition than he, and that the least a wife could do was to stick it. So I stuck it.

And then he became jealous—a thing he had never been. As there were no men of our own kind, he accused me, *me*, of flirting with the men servants. The first time I threw a plate at him, and he cried like a baby, great, big, bitter tears. That sobered me. I think I cried too, for the strain was beginning to tell. I got rid of all the men servants.

And so the days passed into weeks; months. The Armistice came, and peace, what a peace! I was frightened when I looked at myself in the glass. And George's machine did not mend. The doctors said that I must take him away, that he needed a change of scene. As well order me to move a mountain. In sheer desperation I wrote to his mother. She came; and he cursed her,

raved at her, called her everything that was horrible. She was glad to go back to Cornwall. He seemed to hate even his own son.

Twice, no three times, I left him. And then the piteous, appealing letters, beseeching, imploring me to come back to him, that I was his God, his salvation, his everything, that without me he would die. Letters of a child, a passionate, perverse child. And woman like, I went back to him. It was Carlyle and his wife, only infinitely more so. My friends told me that I was a fool. I suppose that I was a fool in their eyes.

The nights were the worst, for George could not sleep. Sometimes for a week, ten days on a stretch, he never closed an eye. I wonder that I didn't go mad myself with the horror. He would see faces on the wall, one after another; like a cinematograph show they would come, he said; and he would describe them to me. "An old fellow with a Vandyke beard and ruffles, and a horrid leer" came quite often, and the Devil—not the horned and hooved variety—but something that would make George cry out in mortal terror; the Spirit of Evil he called it.

All this time he slept in my bed, for he was terrified to be alone. "Oh my God! it's coming now," he would say, and wake me up. When I was awake "things" did not come, he said. And so I stayed awake as much as I could. One night it was a "phosphorescent woman" that came; I must have been dozing. George's shriek of terror woke me. He was shivering all over, and explained

that she "held the key to his soul," and that she was "ghastly, all skin and bones and Evil." Somehow it was always Evil that he feared, horrid, distorted, dreadful Evil. And it was Evil that he saw. At these times he would cling to me like a child. It wasn't in human nature to leave him for long.

As his dreams, or thoughts, or whatever it was, became worse, the more he leaned on me. At those times it was not Love, but rather Worship that he felt for me. One night he told me that he had dreamt that he had crucified me, and that I was Christ on the Cross; that if I wanted to I could save him. It was heart breaking.

I often wonder how many soldiers' wives have had the same experience. I am sure there must be numbers. Every day one reads in the papers of ex-service men, who commit the most outrageous crimes, killing those whom they must have loved. They should not be tried for murder; it isn't right, nor just. One might as well have called George a murderer, morally at least, for time and again he tried to kill me; one night I found a razor under the pillow. Times without number he thought murderously about me; and I could never let him see his son. Men in that condition, men who have fallen into that condition for us, surely deserve some consideration, some mercy from us? The Government must take care of them, nurse them back to the normal, before they cast them adrift upon the unseeing, unthinking world of men and women. They are our *best* those men, the best

that are left to us; and we, we treat them as outcasts or common criminals.

The shell shock case, the nerve case, the mental case, the blind, the halt, and the maimed should be our heroes; they are our heroes! They cannot compete in the Great Struggle which we have made of Life. They cannot push and jostle their way to that Success which we call Possession of Money. If they must live by the sweat of their poor brows, by the labour of their crippled bodies, then they must die. To-day they are destitute, starving, starving with their great dumb eyes fixed upon us, upon us for whom they would have died. Employers of labour complain that they cannot do the work. Labour itself scoffs and says: "More fools they." The King himself pleads for them in vain.

And so we Christians crucify our Christs.

XX

GEORGE died. There was no inquest, for the doctor was kind. "Heart failure" was what the certificate said. Heart failure covers such a multitude of mistakes, such an ocean of sadness, doesn't it? and so many diseases, and things that are not diseases.

Only after a bitter struggle did I allow the doctor to prescribe Veronal for him, only after everything had failed. I tried everything that had ever been known to cure Insomnia, I think: light suppers instead of dinner, a walk in the dark before going to bed, a cup of hot milk the last thing at night, biscuits by the bedside to nibble at night, a hot water bottle on the nape of the neck, menthol rubbed on the forehead and the neck cords. Poor darling, towards the last I had only to suggest a thing for him to do it; he was so tired, so, so tired. He even gave up smoking, and all stimulants. I tried everything for him: nerve tonics, Phosphates (I remembered that from Roger), Bromide, I even got a man down to try Hypnotic Suggestion. I tried to get my old friend Major W——, I thought that Christian Science might help him; but he was dead, he too had gone out and got killed. Everyone who might have helped seemed to have died, all my old friends, even my father and my brother, even little John. All my living friends deserted me in the hour of trouble; to-day they come to call and laugh and chatter and jazz just in the old new way. They think me changed. They are rather afraid of my opinions, I think. It is the war, they say. Perhaps it is.

George died in my arms. He went to sleep after his evening dose; I watched until I could hear his deep regular breathing, and then I too fell asleep. When I woke up he was dead. Not cold, nor clammy, but warm with my warmth. Not with the old staring horror in his eyes, but fast

asleep. He looked so peaceful, so like the old George, only the lips were blue, that I had no feeling of fear. The Veronal bottle, empty, lay on the floor.

Everyone says that I was extraordinarily calm and collected. I was. For strange though it may seem I knew that it was God, not Death, who had taken George. And all my loss has been gain, for while my friends have gone, I stay on, as the Irish say, "to make my soul."

XXI

I MAY even marry again, who knows?

Perhaps a profiteer may be delivered into my hands. I dearly love to tweak the tail of the Golden Calf.

BS AOB
G12E79

BJJU
GE

200
45x
6/23

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 773 378 5

